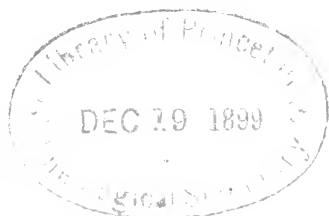


THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH

EDWARD JUDSON

HAND-BOOKS FOR PRACTICAL WORKERS



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The institutional church

NO.

Handbooks for Practical Workers
in Church and Philanthropy

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THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH

The Institutional Church

A PRIMER IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

BY

EDWARD JUDSON

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY WORD

BY

BISHOP POTTER



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PREFACE

It is proposed that the following pages contain lessons from experience, not theories yielded by reflection. Hence the "Institutional Church" is viewed from the standpoint of lower New York, where I have been at work for eighteen years. It would not be strange, however, if the same conditions and problems should be reproduced in other cities. But the environment of each church so varies with its situation that the methods which are fruitful of good in one spot, may elsewhere prove barren and useless. One grows shy of suggesting theories. We must make experiments; just as a ferry boat bumps against the sides of the dock, and seems to feel its way to its exact destination. In Institutional work we frequently find ourselves on the wrong path, and have to retrace our steps in silence. As Cardinal Newman says: "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

At the risk of apparent incompleteness, only such kinds of educational and philanthropic work will be here discussed as have been actually tried by my own church in lower New York.

EDWARD JUDSON.

January, 1899.

INTRODUCTORY WORD

The growth of wealth and of luxury, wicked, wasteful and wanton, as before God I declare that luxury to be, has been matched step by step by a deepening and deadening poverty which has left whole neighborhoods of people practically without hope and without aspiration. At such a time, for the Church of God to sit still and be content with theories of its duty outlawed by time and long ago demonstrated to be grotesquely inadequate to the demands of a living situation, this is to deserve the scorn of men and the curse of God! Take my word for it, men and brethren, unless you and I and all those who have any gift or stewardship of talents, or means, of whatever sort, are willing to get up out of our sloth and ease and selfish diletanteism of service, and get down among the people who are battling amid their poverty and ignorance — young girls for their chastity, young men for their better ideal of righteousness, old and young alike for one clear ray of the immortal courage and the immortal hope — then verily the Church in its stately splendor, its apostolic orders, its venerable ritual, its dec-

orous and dignified conventions, is revealed as simply a monstrous and insolent impertinence!

I should be recreant to my duty if I did not declare that the large remoteness of those who represent Christ and His Church from any intimate or frequent contact with those whom they profess to serve is one of the most grotesque incongruities — one of the most absolutely indefensible inconsistencies of our modern Christianity. Do I hear somebody say that this has been the method of the Church here and elsewhere from time immemorial? Then I say so much the worse for the Church! Do I hear some one else say that the conditions of life in the more crowded and unsanitary parts of New York make it impossible for anybody who has not been trained by birth and poverty to such conditions to live there? Then I say in the plainest possible terms that the English language can command that such a statement is absolute and utter rubbish. I know better. Anybody can live safely and healthfully under the excellent sanitary conditions of New York to-day, anywhere on this island, and do hard work for God and his brother — if he wants to!

“Do you find your work hard?” I asked, not long ago, of one who had come out of very different surroundings to spend her life down among the poorest and lowest in this New York of ours — “Do you find your work hard?” “Never,” she answered, her whole face aglow with enthusiasm. “Never!

it is so intensely interesting!" So He found it, I think, Who first taught us how to do it. Believe me, my brothers, we shall never find a better road to joy than He has opened for us.

HENRY C. POTTER.

Diocesan House, New York.

(From a sermon preached at the consecration of Grace Chapel, New York, 1896.)



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THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH

CHAPTER I.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH.

Definition.

In savage life individualism predominates. Domestic ties are weak. There is little social feeling. In some barbarous tribes the members of the same family do not come together even to eat. Each one takes his food in private, as a dog drags away a bone to enjoy it apart. Parental affection, even, is short-lived, and the young early learn to fight and care for themselves. The aged are exposed and left to die of hunger or to be eaten up by wild beasts. Inter-tribal wars are frequent and continuous; social alienation prevails. There is little or no instinct of solidarity.

But as men become more civilized they learn to stand shoulder to shoulder. The home becomes more stable; people reef in their individual preferences, and unite for military, industrial, educational and religious ends. Battles do not hinge upon the personal prowess of a single hero. Worthy objects are secured by combinations, in which the individual becomes a small cog in a vast machine. The emi-

nent men of civilized life are not conspicuous for brilliant talents. They are great organizers. They can bring things to pass. They gently coerce others into the realization of their own ideas. Themistocles said: "I cannot fiddle, but I know how to make a small town a great city."

We ourselves belong to a social age. Almost every man whom you meet wears some kind of a badge. Individuals seem instinctively to unite and to form social crystallizations. We have great secret organizations — like the Freemasons and the Odd Fellows — for mutual aid and protection; and insurance companies — accident, life, and fire; we have college fraternities, trades'-unions, social, artistic, and literary clubs, as well as political organizations; and the Church does a large share of her work through the machinery of societies and guilds.

In spite, however, of this strong social trend, the community as a whole does not become more compact and stable. When individual men come closer together into a society, in the very nature of the case they draw away from others, as a new patch shrinks on an old garment, so that the rent is made worse. The more perfectly working men are organized, the wider will be the chasm between them and their employers. When cultivated and congenial spirits join in a coterie for mutual delectation and the pursuit of higher ideals, they only draw the further away from the ignorant and rude. The exclusive societies and clubs into which the rich are gathered intensify caste prejudice and antipathy. So that the social instinct that seemed to have within

it the promise of cohesion, tends ultimately to disintegration. Society is seamed with crevasses, which only widen as individuals come into closer social contact.

It would almost seem as though the Church were the only society in which human units can cohere on a common plane — rich and poor, prince and pauper, the learned and the illiterate. All races and nationalities meet together on a common ground — share in the same aspirations, struggles, and hopes. This was the glory and miracle of the primitive Church, that at a time when race antipathy compared with ours was as sunlight unto moonlight, the middle wall of partition was broken down, and Jew and Greek shared in the common eucharistic meal. And now the extended and complicated congeries of Christian churches distributed through the community — groups of people who, irrespective of social condition, meet together at stated times to share a common repast in memory of their Founder — this forms the one cohesive force in human society. The churches are stitches that keep the different parts of the social fabric from falling asunder.

Christ's nature was intensely social. He was a Being:

“ Not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food.”

He was not a severe anchorite, like John the Baptist, dwelling apart in the desert, living on locusts and wild honey, clad in a rough camel's hair cloth fastened about His loins by a leathern thong. He

was not a gloomy fanatic, fiercely breaking away from the amenities of social and domestic life. He was not a hollow-eyed, thin-necked student, who comes forth from the shadows of his books, and stands dazed when confronted with the hard facts, contradictions and trivialities of every-day life. He was a man of affairs rather. He liked to be jostled by crowds of men. He frequented the synagogue and the market-place. He was fond of taking His promenades among the fishing smacks that skirted the Galilean lake. He scandalized the Pharisees by being hail fellow well met with Publicans and sinners. The working man felt instinctively that He was his friend. Little children stretched out their arms for His embrace and His blessing.

“ And so the Word had breath and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds,
In lowliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

“ Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
Or those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.”

It is not strange that so social a Being should have formed a society and have set up a new social order. He wrote no book. He proposed to perpetuate His influence by saturating a few individuals with His spirit and His ideals. He produced a social organism. He gathered about him a coterie of kindred spirits that formed a kind of family. “Thou, also, art one of them,” sneeringly remarked

the servant girl to Peter. The high priest examined Christ, not only touching His *doctrines*, but His *disciples*. It was this new social organism springing up in the heart of the Jewish state that awakened the misgivings and the alarm of the hierarchs. Plato complained that the philosophers of his time hid behind the stone wall; they refused to face the dust and sleet of opposition. Christ came out into the open. He transmuted abstract theory into a social organism. "Upon this rock I build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." It is easy to dream dreams and to cherish beautiful thoughts, but to transmute thought into pictured canvas, or sculptured marble, or intricate machinery, or robust and enduring social organism is to meet with resistance and friction at a thousand unlooked-for points:— "Hic labor, hoc opus est." It is one thing for an inventor to have an idea; it is quite another thing for him to freeze it into metal. Catherine the Great wrote to Voltaire: "My dear philosopher, it is easier to write on paper than on human flesh."

David Livingstone, while building a temporary house in Central Africa, met with many casualties. Once he found himself dangling from a beam by the arm which a lion's teeth had crunched; again, he had a fall from the roof; a third time he cut himself with the axe; exposed to the hot sun, his lips became scabbed and broken. It is not strange that in a letter written to his sister on the second day after occupying the house he should say: "Oh, Janet, know thou, if thou art given to building cas-

gles in the air, that that is easy work to erecting cottages on the ground."

Christ produced a society which has survived the changes and shocks of nineteen centuries. He meant that His disciples should be gathered into social groups. The world must have something definite to lay hold of and to persecute. Christendom consists of a vast congeries of these groups of worshippers. By the word "church" as used in these pages, I do not mean the *spiritual* church, which embraces all true believers in Christ everywhere. I mean rather what is often called the *local church* — a definite group of Christians who meet habitually at one place to break the loaf and take the cup in memory of their Lord, to sing hymns to His praise, to offer prayers in His Name, to ponder His teachings, and to endeavor to live His life over after Him.

This definite social organism, the local church, contains the potency for the cure of all the ills that flesh is heir to. Here lies the solution of every social problem. Let no other society displace in our consciousness the local church. The Young Men's Christian Association, for instance, cannot take its place. It is simply auxiliary. It may serve, like the wings of a net, by soft persuasion, to draw people within the embrace of the church. Had the church done its duty, amid the changing and complicated conditions of our modern life, the Young Men's Christian Association would hardly have had cause for existence. It does very little work that could not be better done — more econom-

ically, thoroughly and comprehensively — by the local churches, if they should organize their own young men for work among young men. And, I believe that if the Young Men's Christian Association were being organized to-day, instead of fifty years ago, it would be, like the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, a local church organization. The ideal is that the young men of each individual church should be organized into a Young Men's Christian Association of that church, to work for the young men in that neighborhood. The conservatism of the church is partly to blame that many of her ardent young men prefer to do their Christian work outside. If they undertake any new aggressive work within the church they are too often exposed to the chill of criticism. It is not strange that they apply their energy along new grooves rather than through the worn channels of ecclesiasticism. This, however, is a dangerous tendency. Let us be patient with the church. It is through her that Christ meant to overcome the world. Let the church be first in our thoughts. It is a mistake for a young man to give the precedence to the Young Men's Christian Association — full of enthusiasm in the hall, limp and nerveless in the church. Let us not be like the husband described by Coleridge: "Loud on the hustings, gay in the ball-room, but mute and sullen by the family fireside."

The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor cannot for a moment be thought of as a substitute for the local church. There are minds,

of course, of the *pint cup* variety. They have room to hold only one organization at a time. To such the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor will be the all in all of religious organization; they will make the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor their church. But such a tendency is harmful and destructive. The society is of use only as it nourishes the parent church. Otherwise, with all its magnificent growth, it will prove only a luxuriant ivy, making a splendid show with its dark-green, glossy leaves, but all the time sucking out the life of the church around which it twines.

Rescue missions, gospel halls, and the like, are only feeble and hectic substitutes for vigorous church organizations. The church should have its missions in a social swamp, and begin by being itself a mission. It is a seductive theory that bad people cannot be brought at once into the church, but must first be reached by a mission and from thence be forwarded to the church; and they tell us at the missions that they send their converts to the churches. I am convinced that cases are extremely scarce of converts joining churches from mission halls. To get your convert from the mission to the church is like pulling a cat across the carpet by the tail backwards. It is the mission hall that he wants to join. He has not been inside of a church, perhaps, for twenty years. When he arrives there he is regarded with coldness and suspicion. The problem of to-day is to bridge over the chasm between the church and the mission hall. They should supplement each other. In the one we find sacrament,

organization and education; in the other, primitive zeal and the power of the Holy Spirit. Either make your mission hall a church by observing there the holy ordinances of Baptism and Communion, as the apostles would doubtless have done, or else have in the church itself the spirit and method of the mission hall. In order to catch a rat, you must put your bait inside the trap.

Mission halls are attractive. Human nature is so put together that if it can find any road to heaven, except through the church, it will take that road every time. The mission hall provides a kind of religious free lunch, and people always like to get something for nothing, even though it be gospel preaching and singing. You do not have to join anything, nor give anything. There is little sense of obligation. People take Christ as a Savior but not as a Lord. They want the rest without the yoke. There is very little Bible knowledge imparted, and correspondingly little development of character and intelligence, or ripening of Christian consciousness. A man testifies as follows: "Two years, six months, and fourteen days ago I came into this mission drunk and in rags, and knelt down by that chair. Jesus sweetly saved me, and this is the happiest two years, six months, and fourteen days I have ever spent." The next night the testimony is the same as above except that he adds one day to the time separating him from his life of sin. A mission without a church is like an ambulance without a hospital. If we are to have churches and missions both, then, instead of a great mission mak-

ing converts and trying to send them to the surrounding churches, let each church plant at strategic points little neighborhood missions from which it can draw converts into its own communion; only the mission should be near enough to the parent church for all the people to worship in her edifice at least once on Sunday. In a circle of such a size that the worshiper can come from his house on or within the circumference to a central place of worship for the Sunday morning service, I would have only one church. Let there be one church, one baptismal font, one Communion table, one college of ministers, one board of deacons, and, on the other hand, as many Sunday evening services and Sunday schools and week-night prayer meetings as are required to meet the religious wants of each neighborhood. But, the church should not establish missions without first being a mission itself; a mission should be the natural overflow, simply, of the church life, not an effort on our part to provide a kind of servants' dining-room for people of low degree with whom we do not care to come into too close social contact ourselves.

To the churches, then, expressing as they do, in social form, the thought of Christ, and containing within themselves the medicament for every kind of social ill, human society owes its healthy cohesion. In our great towns, however, the churches are confronted by new and artificial conditions, that tend to social alienation, the separation of class from class. Take New York, for instance. The southernmost section is being solidly filled up with busi-

ness houses, to the exclusion of residences. The process is almost as complete as when water fills a retort from the bottom up. But it is a mistake to suppose that our town is going to be solidly filled with business all the way up. Just as soon as the island widens out northward, business tends to fringe the water fronts and the main thoroughfares, and to ascend skyward by means of elevators; and there are left, in the interstices behind, congested masses of population, denser than anywhere else in the world. People are packed together in tenement-houses like sardines in a box. It is a mistake to suppose that the upper part of New York is entirely given over to residence, and the lower part to business. Because people do not belong to our set we sometimes forget that they exist at all. "Out of sight out of mind."

Now these great masses of people left down-town by the upward trend of business and genteel residences, and composed largely of foreign elements dominated by materialistic or sacramentarian notions, constitute at our very doors a mission-field of unparalleled richness and promise. But, like all rich mission-fields, it is hard to work, and, if neglected, becomes a menace. We have a new and very dangerous phase of social alienation. The tendency is for the intelligent, well-to-do and churchgoing people to withdraw little by little from this part of the city. They go to Harlem, or Brooklyn, or New Jersey. This cannot be helped. It is right for families to move where the children can have the best advantages of air and space and school

and society. And so the down-town churches steadily decline, and the people charge it up to the minister. They say he does not draw. They have a new minister every two or three years. The wealth, little by little, leaks out of the church, and the Gospel appliances become correspondingly weaker. The respectable families move away from the church; and in their places come people who are indifferent, uncongenial or perhaps even hostile. The old, tried methods do not seem to work. The church is being gradually engulfed by a sand-wave. It is not the fault of the minister. An angel's energy and patience could do nothing but retard the process of decay. The only thing left for the church to do seems to be to move up-town; and so the plain people down-town, see Christianity, as far as it is represented by the churches, die out before their face and eyes. These dense masses of human beings are left practically unchurched. But they have their revenge. We cannot escape them. We are like the silly ostrich that hides her head in the sand. Up-town is all the time becoming down-town. The streets swarm with children like a rabbit warren. There is a saloon on every corner. These people outvote us at every election. We catch their diseases. The miasma from this social swamp steals upward and infects our whole municipal life, and our cities determine the character and destiny of our country. We must be either hammer or anvil — either subdue these people with the Gospel, or in the end be assimilated by them. We send our best men and women to the heathen, and pay their trav-

eling expenses; and when God, seeing how concerned we are for the heathen, puts it into their hearts to come to us from all parts of the world, paying their own traveling expenses, they do not look so interesting and picturesque. Instead of being glad to see them, we turn away in disgust and despair. We are too like the company of home militia, that enlisted with the express understanding that they were never to be taken out of the county, "unless it should be invaded." As in a case of dropsy the water rises little by little until it floods the vitals, so there is danger that our city will be gradually submerged beneath the tide of alien and unevangelical population.

Such is the problem of social alienation that confronts us in New York. On the one side is a vast tenement-house population, insufficiently provided with the ameliorating influences of school and church; on the other, in more favored districts, the well-to-do classes, in possession of the more ample and effective educational and ecclesiastical appliances. We are like a workman who uses his strongest tools where there is the easiest work to do, or a general who turns his heaviest guns upon the weakest point in the enemy's line, or a physician who injects his medicines into the least diseased portions of his patient's body. We make the mistake of huddling our best preachers and our most amply equipped churches in that part of the city where they are least needed, and where refining influences are most abundant; and, on the other hand, just where the population is densest and materialism

most strongly entrenched, we bring to bear our weakest and poorest Gospel appliances. It is as though during a cold night one should unconsciously gather the bed-clothes up around one's neck, leaving one's lower extremities stark and chill.

This is where the Institutional Church comes in as a reconciling force. The name is not one of my own choosing. It does very well, however, if you put the emphasis in the right place. Perspective is everything in morals and religion. Emphasize *Church*, not *Institution*. Everything good is haunted by evil. Dangers lurk along all right paths, but this is no reason for turning back. Goethe says: "Upon the most glorious conception which the human mind forms, there is always pressing in strange and stranger stuff." You do not want a great palatial institution with a feeble church attachment, atrophied through disuse. Our social, educational and philanthropic equipment should be saturated with the Gospel spirit. The purpose of all Institutional Churches should be gently to turn humanity around, and direct its sad, averted gaze toward the cross.

An Institutional Church, then, is an organized body of Christian believers, who, finding themselves in a hard and uncongenial social environment, supplement the ordinary methods of the Gospel — such as preaching, prayer-meetings, Sunday-school, and pastoral visitation — by a system of organized kindness, a congeries of institutions, which, by touching people on physical, social, and intellectual sides, will

conciliate them and draw them within reach of the Gospel. The local church under the pressure of adverse environment tends to institutionalism.

The church contains within itself the potency for the cure of every social ill. All that good people seek to accomplish through University Settlements, Young Men's Christian Associations, Rescue Missions, and other redemptive agencies, can better be done through churches, embedded in society, each forming a center of light, which irradiates the circumjacent gloom. The human mind could not conceive of a more perfect machine for cleaning up the misery of a great city than the network of local churches distributed through it, provided each church would interest itself in the fallen and wretched immediately about it. I would be glad to see the local church girdled with philanthropic institutions, each on a small scale, meeting the needs of the neighborhood — as orphanage, dispensary, hospital, home for the aged, and so on. We like to say that Christianity is the root of our philanthropies, but plain people cannot trace the connection. If the church should directly interest itself in curing social sores, a workingman could not pass one of our ecclesiastical structures without the same softening of the heart and moistening of the eye which he feels when he passes some great hospital and sees the white faces of little children pressed against its window-panes, and thinks that his turn may come to seek shelter within its embrace.

The best way to redeem society and to save our cities is to reinforce the churches in our neglected

districts. In a city there are two kinds of fields. In one, the social currents seem to converge in favor of the church. Decent, Sabbath-observing, churchgoing people are living in the neighborhood, and all you have to do is to throw open the doors of your beautiful church, and the people flock in to hear your fine preacher and your artistic music. Their social life is not complete without a pew in the neighboring house of worship. Hence the success of your church is swift-footed. If you have a good minister, attractive music and stately architecture, the church seems to grow itself. The minister preaches two good sermons on Sunday, delivers his midweek address, performs his round of faithful pastoral visitation, and at the end of a year or two rejoices to see his pews comfortably filled. He fancies that he does it all. But he is like a boy rowing down-stream. The oars are reinforced by the steady, swift current. If he is a shrewd man, he will always be careful to select such a spot — where the social currents converge in his favor. He will call it securing a strategic position. But the very swiftness of your success awakens misgiving. You begin to be suspicious of so speedy a victory. You recall St. John's profound generalization: "We know that the whole world lieth in the wicked one." You are surprised that with this environment the Church of Christ should advance with such long, easy strides. You begin to ask yourself the question that fell from the lips of the aged patriarch Isaac, when his younger son undertook to palm himself off as the elder, and spread before him the

savory but premature dish of venison: "How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?" You proceed to analyze the audience you have gathered, and you discover it is composed of people who went to church before. You explore the ecclesiastical pedigree of those who fill your pews, and you find them *registered*. You have only succeeded in getting a handful here, and a handful there, from this church and from that. There is no production of new material. It is merely a sleight-of-hand performance, as when you turn a kaleidoscope, and the same identical pieces of glass shift and form a new combination. You have really made no impression upon the great non-churchgoing mass. The acute pleasure you feel in seeing so many people in your church is a good deal mitigated by the thought that another minister, here and there, is correspondingly depressed by noting their absence from his. Many a so-called successful church is built at the expense of a score of feebler ecclesiastical growths. Is there any real gain to the cause of Christ? You are just working over old material. You produce no new stuff. Our question should be, not "How can our church grow fastest?" but "How can we most profoundly affect and change the character of the community in which we live?"

There is another kind of field. Here the Latin and Celtic races predominate over the Saxon. Materialistic and sacramentarian notions form the religion of the people. Evangelical people are fleeing, as from a plague, and their places are rapidly filled by families that are unresponsive to your

Gospel. Day and night you are confronted by the hideous forms of pauperism, prostitution, intemperance and crime. You are like one who with great expense and pains builds a library in a place where people have no taste for books. Here it may take you ten years to fill your church; but upon examining your people, you will find that they have come to you out of the world, not out of other churches. This is clear gain. The idea of the Institutional Church is to cling to the old fields, adapting its methods to the kind of people God sends. It does not want to become a traveling show.

It is not strange that many good people are shy of Church institutionalism. They say that what we want is the *simple Gospel*, and, if Christ be lifted up, He will draw all men to Him. But the difficulty is to bring men within reach of the Gospel. How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? The preacher is often like one who rings a silver bell in a vacuum. What is the use of transmuted the Gospel into atmospheric vibrations, if there are no ears within the reach of those vibrations? Church institutionalism is nothing more than systematic, organized kindness, which conciliates the hostile and indifferent, alluring them within reach, and softening their hearts for the reception of the word of life. It never can take the place of the Gospel. The Institutional Church is not something strange and abnormal. Any church that has a Women's Sewing Circle, or a Sewing School for Girls, or a Kindergarten, is by so much an Institutional Church. All the old, tried methods

must be conserved — well-thought-out and inspiring sermons, attractive prayer-meetings and Sunday-school, faithful and painstaking pastoral visitation. The worst off need the best we have of preaching, music, architecture,—all the rest; not cold victuals,—a church, not a mission. My own rule is to preach twice on Sunday, attend my Sunday-school, conduct my weekly prayer-meetings, and make from thirty to fifty calls a week. An assistant cannot do this in lieu of the pastor. People want to see the same man in the pulpit that they saw by the wash-tub or the sick-bed. Otherwise the charm is broken. If institutionalism means to displace the old *régime* of preaching and pastoral work, it had better take itself off. Its only use is to bring people within range of the pastor and preacher. These things ought ye to do, and not to leave the other undone.

The task we outline is a difficult one. When, under the pressure of adverse social conditions, the vitality of a church has sunk below a certain point, convalescence becomes almost impossible. Consider for a moment the forces that work toward the disintegration of a church in the lower wards of a great town, and to a certain extent everywhere else. The world, the flesh and the devil are against it as a matter of course, because it is Christian; a large section of Christendom is against it because it is Protestant and Evangelical; all the other Protestant denominations are out of sympathy with it, because of its distinctive denominational tenets; the churches of its own Communion, I will not say are against it,

but are certainly not suffering poignant solicitude on its behalf, for fear that it may draw away some of their own members who are sorely needed at home. It occupies a bleak position indeed. Even if it is thoroughly united in itself, it can scarcely make headway against such mighty odds; it has only a fighting chance. But, to make its outlook still more hopeless, its own slender membership, under the hydraulic pressure of trouble, instead of being fused into absolute unity, is too often divided and split up into opposing cliques and factions. Straining itself to the utmost, it cannot meet its ordinary current expenses, and at the end of every year is confronted by a new deficit, which can only be met by a new lien upon its ground and building. In great mouthfuls, it is eating up its own property. And all the time it knows, or ought to know, that with its adverse environment, it must spend each year for aggressive missionary work as much, at least, as is required for the current expenses, or else must steadily and rapidly decline. We may say of the down-town church what the Czar said of Turkey: "We have on our hands a sick man, a very sick man; it will be a great misfortune, if, one of these days, he should slip away from us before the necessary arrangements have been made."*

*The Rev. Dr. MacIntosh, after serving for fourteen years the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, gives the following reasons for his resignation: "The almost unprecedented financial crisis through which we are passing; the unparalleled death sweep, robbing our church of many of our best workers and most liberal

These are only parts of the difficulty we meet. To crystallize in social forms a beneficent stream of tendency already existing is comparatively easy, but to originate a new tendency for good, or to reverse a vicious current of thought or feeling, is a slow and toilsome process. You will find yourself alone and unsupported. People, discerning your philanthropic disposition, instead of putting their shoulder to the wheel, will hasten to lay down upon you the burdens which they ought to carry themselves. Every reform, they say, goes through three stages; first, it is laughed at; then, it is said to be contrary to religion; and then, everybody says that he knew it before. As with *Childe Roland*, your hope will dwindle —

“ Into a ghost not fit to cope
With that obstreperous joy success would bring.”

Foreign missions have indeed the first claim. The blood of our martyrs in Asia and Africa eternally forbids our retreat. A Christianity which is deaf to the cry of the heathen, will be sure to be

givers; the progressive movement of population from our neighborhood to the suburbs and the country; the over-churching of our district and the thinning out of Presbyterian families and residents; the impossibility of obtaining help and co-operation in the eldership and the diaconate, the Sunday-school, the prayer meetings and the Young Peoples' Societies; the growing neglect of the second Sabbath service, and the steady lengthening of the summer absence from the city, breaking up the continuity of church life and work.” In our view wise institutionalism would prove the only remedy for the difficult congested condition so pathetically described.

recreant to her trusts in our own land. A charity which begins at home generally stops before it begins. A missionary spirit that reaches out its hand to the lost in the uttermost parts of the earth, will not neglect the perishing at our own doors. A rifle that can be depended upon for six hundred yards will not fail you when fired point blank. Let no word of mine ever depreciate the sacred cause to which my father gave his life. But more and more the world becomes all one. The mission-fields are not all in Asia and Africa. Some of them are close at hand. Geography does not make a missionary. Foreign Missions, Home Missions, City Missions are only different expressions of that same missionary spirit that may be defined as the disposition in a man voluntarily to put himself in a spot where the currents of evil will converge against him. The true missionary will not seek a good place, but will make the place good, where he is. He will not look for a church that will serve as a pedestal for himself, but will lay himself down and become a pedestal upon which his church will stand — a beautiful statue. Success means suffering. If you succeed without suffering, it is because somebody suffered before you. If you suffer without succeeding, it is in order that somebody may succeed after you.

The further we proceed along the path of strenuous endeavor, the steeper the way becomes. Innumerable hindrances twine themselves about our legs and catch at our skirts like clinging vines, and the tenuous, thorny branches of blackberry bushes. Our feet seem made of lead, and hard to move, as

in a night-mare. There is so little to show for the effort put forth we have to

“Reach a hand through time
To catch the far-off interest of tears.”

We become more sober in our judgments than at the beginning. Our pristine resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought; we say with Egmont: “Time passes; the head swims; things go on their old way, and instead of sailing over wide seas, according to a preconceived course, we can thank God, if, in such weather, we can keep our ship off the rocks.” Sieyès, when asked what he had done during the Reign of Terror, replied: “I lived.” We realize the limitations of our responsibility. We are not required to produce a search-light. It would be of little use in illuminating a city. It belongs to us simply to light a street lamp. This becomes an object lesson. Virtue is infectious. Another lamp will be soon lighted at the next corner. So, little by little the dark streets will be illumined by the mild, evenly-diffused radiance of countless lamps, and in the end the whole city become bright. One comes to see that the lighting of a single lamp requires more than a lifetime for its accomplishment. “In great things, it is enough to have wished.” Others will see our tracks in the snow, and follow them home. “Es lebt nach uns.”

“Others shall sing the song,
Others shall right the wrong,
Finish what I begin
And all I fail of win.

“ What matter I or they,
Mine or another’s day,
So the right word be said
And life the sweeter made?

“ Ring! bells in unrequited steeples,
The joy of unborn peoples;
Sound, trumpets far-off blown!
Your triumph is my own.”

CHAPTER II.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH.

Worship — The Sunday Morning Service.

In the Institutional Church the spirit of worship should be vigilantly preserved and cherished. The emphasis lies on the *church* rather than on her *institutions*. There is constant danger of secularization. Amid the varied efforts put forth to improve man’s condition in this life, the consciousness of God and of the future life grows thin and weak. Only a robust sense of the Fatherhood of God can produce and maintain the instinct of human brotherhood. All the charitable and educational agencies of the church should be suffused with the spirit of worship. They are only the wings of the Gospel net. The mission of kindness is to soften hearts for the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus. Christian sympathy tends to draw reluctant humanity within the embrace of Divine Love.

Public worship, then, expressing itself in the Sun-

day and Week-day services of the church, claims our attention. The following general schedule of worship has grown up to meet the needs of our church in lower New York: The church meets on Sunday morning for Public Worship, the service culminating in Communion; on Sunday afternoon, for the Study of the Bible, children preponderating (in other words, the Sunday School); on Sunday evening, for Evangelistic Work, the service culminating in Baptism; on Friday evening, for Social Worship, older people preponderating (in other words, the Prayer Meeting); on Wednesday evening, for Social Worship, again, younger people preponderating (in other words, the Young People's Meeting); and, on the other nights of the week, for Gospel Meetings. Observe that all through these successive assemblies for worship, with different shades of purpose, and varying personnel, it is always the Church that meets, and the services should all be under the general conduct of the pastor, but open to all, whether members of the church or not.

Let us take up these different acts of worship one by one.

First, then, the *Sunday Morning Service*, to which this chapter is devoted. The church meets on Sunday morning for Public Worship, the service culminating in Communion.

I. *Building up the Congregation.*

The church has always made much of the stated gatherings of the saints. The inspired

writer enforces our duty not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. The younger Pliny, 107 A. D., in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, gives it as one of the results of his judicial investigation of the Christians in his province of Bithynia, that "they met on an appointed day at sunrise, sang responsively a song to Christ as to God, and then pledged themselves by an oath, not to any evil work, but that they would commit no theft, robbery, nor adultery, would not break their word, nor sacrifice property entrusted to them. Afterwards, at evening, they assembled again to eat ordinary and innocent food." The perpetuity of the Christian religion is largely due to this custom of periodic public worship. We sometimes speak lightly of it, as if the Christian were doing little or nothing for the cause of Christ who only attends church. But is it not true that faithful attendance upon her services is essential to the very maintenance of Christianity? Let us not depreciate the host of humble believers, who, while they are not conspicuous as Christian workers, yet are faithful to the appointments of their church, coming promptly and regularly to her services and joining heartily in her worship. How sweet and solemn are the cadences of Cardinal Newman's lines, written by him when he little thought of entering the Roman Communion!

"Oh that thy creed were sound!

For thou dost soothe the heart, thou Church of Rome,
By thy unwearied watch, and varied round
Of service in thy Saviour's holy home."

The maintenance of stated public worship on Sunday, in a great town, all the year through, rain or shine, hot or cold, in times like these, when the sense of obligation in this direction is weak, even among Christians, so that they come when they feel like it and stay away for slight cause, either to ride the bicycle, or to lounge over the Sunday newspaper, the most effective engine that could be devised quietly to displace in the human consciousness the thoughts of God by filling it to the brim with the things of sense,—to sustain evangelical worship in a part of the city that is dominated so largely by materialistic and sacramentarian notions, where, as results of past strife and depression, the molten lava of ecclesiastical life has cooled into vicious crystallizations, so that Protestantism finds itself broken up into small competing camps; *where the habits of the people are migratory, and in all social organisms the centrifugal forces preponderate over the centripetal; and, in a town like ours, where even good people make nothing of stay-

* I delineated on a map of New York city the parochial limits of a Roman Catholic church not far from where I preach, and I found within its parish no less than ten Protestant church edifices, and that in a part of the city where the Catholic population preponderates. Is it strange that the Roman Catholic church edifice is crowded, and that each one of the Protestant church edifices is only about half full? If the Protestants had only one church edifice in that section, they, as well as the Romanists, would have to multiply their services, increase the number of their officiants, and then hardly have room for the people.

ing away from their own church to indulge the vagrant instinct which impels them from church to church in the restless and exciting occupation of sampling the preaching and the music, or else to perform some pious task outside or to attend union evangelistic services in secular halls, which tend often to discredit and displace in the thought of Christians the regular services of their own churches—to maintain public worship in such an environment, is no light task. It is a problem that calls for dogged faith and exhaustless patience. In the up-town church, solicitude is felt for the second service; in the down-town church, for the first.

The difficulties of the situation impel some of us toward *sensationalism*. We think we must secure the ear of the public at any cost. Our seats must be filled at whatever sacrifice of dignity and self-respect. But it is better to fail on right principles than to succeed on wrong ones. Such success is short-lived. The very swiftness of its approach awakens our suspicion. There is sure to be a depressing reaction. We are like the Arab who cuts down the palm to get the dates. He succeeds this year, at the expense of next. A camp-stool congregation neither pays nor repents. The appetite for sensational deliverances, like the taste for confections, grows by what it feeds upon. To keep pace with this morbid taste, we must all the time keep sprinkling in sugar and spice thicker. The people come together to be amused and excited. There is no vital coherence through social or spiritual affinity. Take away the clap-trap, and the audi-

ence dissolves, like snow in spring. However slow the real growth of our church it must always be along the line of our supplying people, not with what they want, but with what they need.

No, the congregation must be built up, if at all, through slower and more rational processes. We shall reach the top of the hill only by following prosaic and winding paths. The only legitimate sensationalism is that of kindness. Disinterestedness is so scarce in a large town that if you stop to perform a kind act, you will be sure to produce a sensation. Against sensationalism of this kind there is no law. The key-note of such vast organisms as Dr. Russell H. Conwell's church in Philadelphia, I am sure, is sympathy. *Church Institutionalism* is nothing more nor less than organized kindness; and in the long run this will bring people to church.

Pastoral visitation, also, kind-hearted, systematic and persistent, will incline people toward the church door. Dr. Cuyler recommends studying the Bible in the forenoon and door-plates in the afternoon. My own practice is to make not less than thirty, often more than fifty calls a week. This should be kept up all the year around. The minister's success may be accurately measured by the size and character of his calling-list. Only one must not go round and round in beaten paths, visiting the same families in a perfunctory way. Some need very few visits, being already firmly attached to the church. Others it is best to drop from the list, when it is clear, after repeated calls, that they are impervious

to church influences. A prudent dog does not bark persistently and vehemently at a tree where there is no squirrel. Keep adding new families to your calling-list. Let it embrace all the families represented in the church, congregation, Sunday school, Young People's Society, kindergarten, sewing school, gymnastic classes, and all other societies and departments of the church — as well as all families that you incidentally learn are not attending any church. A rich and varied calling-list like this is invaluable when, either by mail or in person, you wish to apprise your people of some special occasion and try to rally your whole constituency. In this way you keep your army in a continual state of mobilization.

The pastor, himself, should make parish calls. This work cannot be delegated to assistants. The visits of the missionaries should merely bridge over the chasm between the pastor's visits. Such visits are very helpful to the minister's social, mental and moral life. They keep his heart warm. The physical exercise required is wholesome. The temptation is to linger in the study. One hates to start out. Pastoral visitation seems to be the very drudgery of ministerial life. But, if we overcome our repugnance to this work and plunge bravely in, day after day, we come home at the end of the afternoon all in a glow over the work done, resolved to go out again on the morrow, and only remorseful because we have not done more of this kind of work in the past.

One should carry with him a few well-assorted

tracts with a pretty picture on the first page and the church notice printed on the last. In this way the children are conciliated, a message is borne suited to the condition of each member of the household — inquirers, young Christians, the sorrowing, intemperate, and so on,—besides a definite souvenir of the pastor's visit is left behind. It is well, also, for us to carry with us interesting religious papers, which are much prized by the sick and the shut-in.

Each call should be permeated by a definite religious purpose. Lead the conversation from the lower ranges of gossip and business up to a higher spiritual level. As George Eliot has it: "Enter into every one's feelings, and take the pressure of their thought, instead of urging your own with iron resistance." Monopolization of talk is the besetting sin of ministers. By skilful questioning, and sympathetic attention, draw out from each heart the story of its suffering, and deftly apply the medicaments of the Gospel. While others are talking, do not have a sleepy, far-away look in your eyes. In the case of the sick, inquire about appetite, sleep, pain and so on. Take a bright view of the situation. Teach the simple lesson of faith to the dying. Leave some little tract which may be slipped under the pillow, containing words of comfort from the Scriptures. Sir Walter Scott, when dying, requested his son-in-law to read to him; "From what book?" asked Mr. Lockhart, glancing at the library. "Need you ask?" was the reply. "There is but one;" and the fourteenth chapter of Saint John's Gospel was read.

Ascertain, as far as you can, the religious status of each member of the household, and strive to attach each one to some side of the church life. Point inquirers, especially children, to Christ. Persuade the secret believer to join the church. Invite the children to the Sunday school, and the young men and women to the Christian Endeavor meeting or the choir, and so on. Let your visit produce definite results, and not evaporate into merely sentimental intercourse.

A few words of prayer form a happy ending to the pastor's visit, if the circumstances are favorable, and the family give their consent. Only the worship should be very informal. By the sick bed, one needs simply to bow the head and in low tones to address the Savior as a friend standing close by. The gift of a few simple flowers will often bring a smile of grateful pleasure to the wan lips of those who suffer. With mute eloquence they express your sympathy, and suggest the Heavenly Father's love.

On returning home from our pastoral visits, it is well for us to jot down cases of need or suffering, and any thoughts or illustrations that have occurred during our visits. This material will enrich our private devotions, as well as the prayers on Sunday. Each household we shall find, has its own bitterness, and joys with which the stranger doth not intermeddle. If, in our public petitions, we carry these experiences in our minds, describing them, but not so closely as to betray confidences, our people will discover that we are in vital sympathy with

them, and our prayers will be pervaded with the spirit of deep and intelligent intercession. Often, too, our best thoughts come to us in conversation or discussion. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." If we can say to our people on Sunday some of the simple and homely things which we said to them as individuals when they poured out to us their confidences in their homes, our sermons will gain in point and pathos.

Some of the more intelligent and spiritual members of our churches may be trained to visit families with something of the spirit and method of the pastor. To each one may be assigned a group of families or a list of individuals to visit. At definite times they make their reports to the minister. Thus they become pastor's assistants. Families should be wisely selected according to ties previously formed, as when the families represented in a Sunday school class are given to its teacher, to be visited and watched over. In this way, little by little, the church and congregation will be divided into convenient groups, large or small, according to the time which the visitor is able to give to the work. Cases of sickness and distress may be put on the lists of several visitors, so that they may receive frequent calls. I have not found the indiscriminate and wholesale visitation of all the families in a given neighborhood productive of much good. The method seems too mechanical. I would rather follow up the threads of influence and acquaintance which Providence puts within my reach, calling

upon those whom I meet at the services of the church, or in any of the departments of its work.

The pastor should also have a kind of *office hour* daily, when he is accessible to those who desire sympathy and advice. Inquirers should be encouraged to come to him instead of his being expected to visit them. It does them good to take a definite step of this kind. In ancient Rome, the Tribunes were required to have their doors open night and day, that the victims of Patrician injustice and cruelty might have full opportunity to bring to them the story of their wrongs. The minister, I suppose, must have his hours of seclusion, but these are less likely to be invaded, if the people know that there are certain times each day when they can have access to him. One of the old Scotch ministers used to say that the man who wanted to see him was just the man he wanted to see. The minister who is invisible six days of the week will be incomprehensible the seventh.

I linger over this difficult problem of building up a Sunday morning congregation in a spot where social currents converge against us. The remedy does not lie in sensationalism. Something can be done through the tedious processes of institutionalism, by which I mean organized kindness. But I set great store by pastoral visitation as a way of filling the church. There must, however, be a bright, restful, recreative service. Otherwise, people will not come a second time.

II. *The Service as a Whole.*

There should be the best possible general equipment. It is a mistake to try to reach the "submerged tenth" with cheap and nasty appliances. The worst off need the best we have, in the way of architecture, music, preaching and all the rest. I would place and keep the most beautiful church edifices down-town — like old Trinity and its daughter, St. Augustine's Chapel, lifting her fine façade above the turbid sea of tenement-houses. The foreigners that come among us are accustomed to classical architecture and music in the cities, and even the smaller towns and villages of Europe. How vain it is for us to try to attract and to impress them with crude, inartistic forms and sounds — mission halls and Salvation Army banners and discords —!

"'Taint a knowin' kind o' cattle
Thet is ketched with mouldy corn."

One need not resort to the amphitheatrical church, with its toboggan floor, unless one expects his audience to run up into the thousands. Even then, the structure will prove an offence to the cultivated taste. Would it not be better to have, as Romanists do, smaller churches, more frequent services and a larger staff of ministers? It is better to come into close contact with people than to try to gather great crowds loosely together by the personal magnetism of an exceptional speaker. These *inspirational* centers, far apart as they must be in the

nature of the case, cannot reach down deep and change the character of the community. This can be done only through frequent *institutional* centers where we meet people often and at close quarters. A minister who preaches to thousands at a single service, told me that he did not want to see his people between Sundays.

A chaste simple basilica, seating less than one thousand people, will perhaps meet every æsthetic and acoustic requirement for a given neighborhood. If it becomes uncomfortably full, increase the number of services and of preachers. It is more important that the poor should have beautiful churches than the rich. Let them pass from the squalor of their homes into a new and different world. The rich have beautiful objects in their houses. They may well be content with plainness in the house of God. But when we gather together the poor and the sad, let their eyes, grown dim with tears and weariness, find repose and inspiration in the exquisite arch, and the opalescent window, through which shimmer the suggestive figures of martyrs and saints. Let their ears hear only the sweetest and most ennobling strains. Let everything that meets the senses be uplifting and educational.

The Sunday morning service should be brief, varied, interesting, cheerful. Worship, appropriately conducted, has a high recreative value. We rest through change of occupation. The student amuses himself rowing a boat, but the galley slave would hardly choose that form of recreation. Now no exercise could possibly be invented more

different from the week-day avocation of the workman than going to church on Sunday. He is transported into a fresh realm of thought and action. The new and beautiful environment, the atmosphere of social sympathy, the friendly greetings, the inspiring hymns, in which he himself takes part, the fervent prayers, the brief sermon, in which the minister eloquently unfolds to him the rich and varied lore of Holy Scripture—its history, its poetry, its matchless stories and parables, its spiritual suggestions,—all these afford him pleasures that efface the sensations of mental and physical exhaustion. His thoughts run in new channels. For the time being, at least, he forgets his worries, his resentments, his miseries. Such pleasures are succeeded by no remorseful memories. He takes hold of his work on Monday morning with a firmer grip, for having spent at least a part of Sunday in the house of prayer, instead of lounging at home and brooding over his cares and his wrongs, or else seeking self-forgetfulness in the saloon with its depressing reactions, or even visiting the seashore, which he and his family can generally reach only by an expensive and tiresome journey. And even if he goes to Coney Island for the sea air, or inland in search of green fields, being made up of spirit, as well as soul and body, he will find out that the Sunday recreation is not complete without at least one service in the company of Christians. The church must compete with the world in the recreation of humanity, and in a practical way fulfill her Master's own word: "Come to me and I will give

you rest." The world, too, says: "Come to *me* and *I* will give you rest." We must prove that we can rest people better than the world can. Mankind needs more refined pleasures than those of the body alone. We want recreations that appeal to what is deepest in us. If we rest only the physical and mental parts of our being, then the religious nature is left unfed. Conscience keeps grumbling like a tooth-ache. Let the church, then, take up the challenge of the world, and exert herself to provide the plain people with wholesome, recreative, Sunday services. The working man will soon learn that he cannot afford to keep away from the church, and to seek his rest in pleasures that leave a bitter taste behind, so that the soul is

"As the bird that bites a bee
And darts abroad on frantic wing,
Tasting the honey and the sting."

The Sunday morning service should be symmetrical. The emphasis should not lie exclusively upon the sermon, all the rest being preliminary and incidental. Otherwise when the sermon is a poor one, as sometimes happens, the whole occasion breaks down; and the people go away hollow and ashamed. Let the services reinforce the sermon, so that we shall be strong all along the line. Instead of the interest flagging, let it culminate as the service advances. Put a careful finish upon even the obscurest details.

In the service there should be a happy blending of spontaneity and liturgical formality. Beautiful

forms of devotion, culled from the ancient rituals or from the Psalms of David, humanity's best Prayer-book, used at the opening of the service and at its close, or elsewhere at stated intervals, are restful and inspiring. Monotony has her own charm. The tired spirit settles down upon a form of prayer, like a storm-beaten bird upon a twig. Christ, Himself, prescribed a form. "After this manner, therefore, pray ye," and again; "When ye pray, say." In the agony of the garden, He Himself praying thrice, using the same words; and, on the cross, the anguish of His spirit voiced itself in a Psalm, familiar to Him from His childhood: "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?" But, while forms of prayer have a priceless value, we should not be fettered by them. Often the warm desires of the heart instinctively produce fresh moulds of expression, and amplest room should be made, in the service, for prayer clothed in the simple language born of the occasion.

As far as possible, let the people share actively in the worship. Let the Psalms be read responsively. Let all repeat in unison the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed. As in the apostolic day, let the people respond to the prayers and hymns with the *Amen*.* It is not proper for the minister to say *Amen* to his own prayer. That belongs to the people to say. By saying *Amen*, they indorse the prayer and make it their own. The *Amen* should occur only at the end of the prayer, a spoken word, not an inarticulate groan. More will join in the *Amen*, if

* I Cor., xiv, 16.

it is sung, than if it is simply spoken without music. Teach the people to join in all the hymns and chants, so that the whole congregation will become a great chorus choir. The best rubric is the most ancient one of all, the fourteenth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. How refreshing is his breezy common sense! Public worship should be instructive and aesthetic; that is all. *God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. Let all things be done decently and in order.*

A perfect service cannot be built up over night. Its growth may require years. You will find an order already in use, and people are very sensitive to the slightest change in the service to which they are accustomed. My advice is to proceed cautiously, introducing changes very gradually, and only after you are thoroughly entrenched in the confidence and affection of the people.

Our own order of service is as follows:

- I. Organ voluntary.
- II. Gloria or Sanctus.
- III. Invocation.
- IV. Responsive Reading from the Psalms.
- V. Hymn.
- VI. Old Testament Scripture.
- VII. Chant.
- VIII. New Testament Scripture.
- IX. Chant.
- X. Hymn.
- XI. Notices.
- XII. Sermon.

XIII. Offertory.

XIV. Hymn.

XV. Prayer.

XVI. Benediction.

III. *The Service in Detail.*

I. The Communion.—We have found it very helpful to observe the Communion every Sunday morning. This seems to accord with the primitive custom of the church, the early Christians meeting on the first day of the week to break bread. Besides, the members of a down-town church are so widely scattered, and their attendance upon public worship is necessarily so desultory, that it is peculiarly wholesome and comfortable for them, whenever they come to church of a Sunday morning, to find awaiting them the simple repast that so vividly and pathetically symbolizes Christ's sufferings and death on their behalf, and their deep mystical union with Him through faith and love. Otherwise, a long period might elapse without their sharing in this social rite, which constitutes the very essence of their membership in the visible and local church. It is our custom, on the first Sunday of the month to hold Communion at the close of the morning preaching service. The attendance on that occasion is large. On the other Sundays of the month the Communion precedes the morning preaching service — being a kind of early Communion — where the attendance is small, but the worship correspondingly sweeter. Let the Communion be brief. In the very nature of the case, sign language is most vivid when first pre-

sented to the eye, and loses rather than gains in impressiveness, when too long continued. Communion should not be a doleful repast, but suffused with solemn joy. The prayers should be short, like grace at meat.*

2. The Sermon.—This subject will be treated by itself in the following chapter.

3. Church Music.—This will be taken up in Chapter IV, when we come to treat of the Sunday Afternoon and Evening Services.

4. Public Prayer.—In Public Prayer, we voice the needs, as best we can, of the people in company with whom we pray, either using appropriate forms of prayer compiled from the Psalms of David and the ancient liturgies of the church, or out of a full heart, making our requests in the simple language suggested by the occasion. Such prayer should be brief, artless, unrepetitious. We approach God with awe — neither too familiarly, nor with cringing fear, rather as a child speaks to his parent. We should think of this part of the service beforehand, and not regard it as slight or perfunctory. A glance at the faces of the worshippers, before we pray, will sometimes awaken fresh sympathy, and suggest some new need or sorrow to mention in our prayer.

5. Scripture Reading.—The best rule for Scripture Reading is one found in the Scripture itself: *So they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly,*

* In a large heterogeneous congregation, the use of individual Communion cups has seemed to us more cleanly and hygienic. They save time without marring the beauty and solemnity of the service.

and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Neh. viii, 8.)

6. Giving Notices.—As regards *Giving Notices*, it is well to have a printed *Calendar of Worship*; and, besides this, in a simple and familiar way, take your people into your confidence as to the worship and work of the week.

7. The Offertory.—The *offertory* will be touched upon later—in the chapter on *The Institutional Church and Finance*.

CHAPTER III.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH.

Worship — The Sermon.

I. *The Character of the Sermon.* What kind of a sermon is required at the morning service of an Institutional Church?

1. The sermon should be *expository*. All real preaching may be defined as the interpretation of Holy Scripture. In preaching we take a portion of the Word of God, give its true sense, make it vivid and interesting by means of illustrations and apply it to the personal, social and political behavior of our hearers. The preacher is the interpreter. A Persian poet says:

“I am a kind of parrot; the mirror is holden to me;
What the Eternal says, I stammering say again.”

The Infinite God has come within the reach of

our thought and affection in the radiant personality of Jesus Christ. The Bible is the history of Christ, Who, in His life and character transcends the largest conception which the human mind can form of the Divine. It is the mirror in which our slanting gaze is fronted by the gleaming form of Jesus — the express image of the Divine Person,—as the mountain is reflected on the glassy surface of the lake. While we look, we ourselves are gradually transfigured onto the same image. There is no new truth in religion since the Bible. It contains all we need of revelation, and we may well pray God with Luther that we may not see any vision or miracle, nor be informed in dreams, since we have enough to learn in His Word. Miracle was the seal of revelation, and, in the nature of the case, ceased with the completion of the sacred volume. It is the office of the minister to show Christ, as He is revealed in the Scriptures, like dim twilight, in the Old Testament, like the rising sun, in the New. If Christ be lifted up, the Holy Spirit will draw the beholders to Him.

Such preaching disarms criticism, and makes even praise seem an impertinence. I once heard Dr. John A. Broadus preach a sermon. It was a simple running commentary on the eighth chapter of Romans. At the close of the service, when I told him how much I enjoyed his sermon, he replied, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, that of course it was a good sermon, as it was not his own thought, but the words of the Apostle which he had tried to make plain. If we would try to do some-

thing like this, instead of aspiring to some brilliant intellectual performance, we would be spared many an anxious hour. It was good advice that a minister's wife once gave him as he was starting out from home to preach on an important occasion: "Give them the sermon you preached last Sunday morning; for if you try to preach a great sermon, you will make a fool of yourself." If we do not model our sermon on a review article, but simply endeavor in an interesting way to interpret some passage of Scripture, as a father would make it plain to his children at family prayers, or as a good Bible-class teacher would open it up to his scholars, then we would not be dismayed at the prospect of preaching twice every Sunday. It ought not to seem an impossible task to an intelligent Christian to ponder two passages of Scripture during the week and explain their meaning to others on Sunday. So vital is Holy Scripture, that a portion of it cannot lie in soak for several days in a person's mind, without germinating, and producing a rich harvest of lessons and suggestions. The plain people are always interested in this kind of preaching. An indolent habit, however, should be guarded against. Every passage will yield a logical analysis to close reflection, so that no one need pursue, in the interpretation of Scripture, the method of the minister of whom it was said that being a true successor to the Apostles, when persecuted in one verse he fled into another.

Serial Preaching has its advantages. The people gain a coherent knowledge of Scripture. They

come to church more regularly in order to hear all the sermons in a given course. Less time is required by the minister in the selection of the text, and so he can give more time to the direct study of the sermon. During a long pastorate, one can, little by little, traverse large tracts of Scripture. Only each series should be brief, so as not to open up too tiresome a prospect. In John one could have a series on *The Beginnings of Christendom*, the first chapter; a series on *The New Birth*, the third chapter; a series on *The Samaritan Woman*, the fourth chapter; a series on *The Blind Man*, the ninth chapter; a series on *Christ's Farewell Discourse*, chapters xiv, xv and xvi; a series on *St. John's Record of the Passion*, chapter xviii and xix; a series on *St. John's Record of the Resurrection*, chapters xx and xxi; and so at different times, far apart it may be, the people, without being aware of it, would have gradually embraced, in their Sunday meditation, the whole of that blessed Gospel. An Epistle may be taken up in the same way. The whole life of Christ may be divided into different series, and taken up at different times, so that the people may study it piecemeal, without the sense of weariness that would attend the task of studying that great life all in one long series of sermons. *Peter in the Gospels* makes a good series, if the principal events of his life be studied on Sunday, and the minor incidents perhaps, at the intervening prayer-meetings. And then we might take up *Peter in the Acts*; and then *Peter's Conception of Christ* as given in his First Epistle. St. Paul could

be studied in the same way, or some Old Testament character like Saul or David. A series of good sermons may be preached on *Gleaming Passages in Romans*, *The Twenty-third Psalm*, *The Lord's Prayer*, *The Parable of the Sower*, *The Panoply of God*, in Ephesians, vi; *Christian Love*, in I Cor., xiii; *The Resurrection of the Body*, in I Cor., xv; *The Messages to the Churches*, in Revelation; all these subjects and a hundred others, would prove attractive and fruitful if subjected to serial treatment. The Rev. Dr. George Dana Boardman, of Philadelphia, during a pastorate of thirty years traversed the whole Bible in courses of Expository Lectures, given on Wednesday evenings, quite apart from the Sunday services and the regular week-night prayer-meeting. What a splendid achievement to look back upon, as a result of incidental study! I question whether it can be paralleled in modern Christian history.

In all reproduction of scriptural scenes the preacher should take his stand at the human point of view, and not at the Divine. Instead of trying to put yourself in the place of Christ, enter by imagination into the experience of the sufferer who is healed, and view the world through his eyes. In the case of Peter's wife's mother, the commonplace way is for us to approach the subject from the standpoint of Christ, following Him from the synagogue to Peter's home. It is better to begin with the sick woman. She is one of those for whom ministers pray, who are kept at home from church by illness. She feels so disappointed that she cannot go to the synagogue to hear Jesus! She learns that Peter is

going to bring him home to dinner. "Company is always sure to come when I am least prepared; what a state the house is in. And I lying helpless on my back!" She overhears the conversation at the door. Jesus enters the room, making it radiant with His kind look. He approaches the bed with a reassuring word. In this way the whole scene becomes modern and realistic. Look out upon life from the standpoint of the leper, as Lew Wallace does in *Ben Hur*. Sit down on the dusty pavement by the side of the blind beggar at the temple gate, and with the almost preternatural keenness of ear that belongs to the blind, listen to the shuffling feet of Jesus and His disciples as they approach you when leaving the temple. Overhear that conversation which caught the attention of the blind man and awakened the first flutter of hope even in his sad heart. Then trace out the history of his faith, from its first beginning through all its struggles, till at last he can say to his Redeemer: "Lord, I believe." Share with the sisters of Bethany their distress over their younger brother's illness, their reluctance to send word to Jesus, and their perplexity, when, after Lazarus has been buried, there comes back to them the cold, telegraphic message, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." What can the Master mean? But this germinal word produces hope in the breast even of Martha, so that she says upon meeting Jesus: "I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." Trace the development of this incipient

faith, and observe how Jesus who originated it tenderly nurses it, and finally, at the critical moment, when it threatens to collapse, hastens to its succor with the words, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"—the very echo of that first strange, reassuring word which He had sent her from Perea. So with other New Testament scenes and events. We can always interest our people if we only put ourselves in the place, not of the Great Physician, but of the erring, suffering human creatures to whom He ministered.

2. I am inclined to think that the sermon in the Institutional Church should be *extemporaneous*, unless, indeed, one can read his sermon with the charming freshness and spontaneity that used to characterize the late William M. Taylor, at his time the greatest preacher in our city. One may, perhaps, commit his sermon to memory, so giving the impression of extemporaneousness, while clothing his thought with the elaborate and refined diction which comes only from patient and leisurely study. Speech, purely extemporaneous, has, however, a pleasant effervescence which seems to evaporate from more studied discourse. Paper is apt to slip in between a preacher and his people—a thin but impervious barrier. Human nature is charmed with the spontaneity of extemporaneous speech, except in the case of those who have a reputation for intellectuality to maintain, and who school themselves to admire written discourses. Such people would affect to prefer the polished and burnished rhetoric

of Dean Farrar to the simple and robust eloquence of Mr. Spurgeon. Off-hand speech has, indeed, a certain looseness and repetitiousness. But even this is an advantage in oral discourse. Food, in order to be digestible, must contain a certain amount of waste. One does not like to eat clear cheese. Thought that is too condensed cannot be thoroughly assimilated by the average hearer. The compact style of a written discourse requires of the listener too great mental tension. If he loses a single sentence, or even a phrase or word, the sense of the whole is lost; while the extemporaneous preacher is apt to linger and repeat his thought in different forms; and, as Herbert Spencer says, "Only by varied iteration can alien conceptions be forced on reluctant minds."

In extemporaneous speech, we either do our best or our worst, either hit the bull's-eye, or go wide of the mark; but one would rather miss with a rifle than hit with a shotgun. In a written discourse we are less dependent on mood and environment. In the glow of a great occasion, when one is *en rapport* with a sympathetic audience and treating an interesting theme, he will attain to a certain energy and facility of speech, which would be impossible in the quiet of the study; or else he will be chilled by an irresponsive audience, and fall far below the level of thought reached in hours of solitude.

In preaching extemporaneously we need to have a very clear analysis. We must know beforehand what we are going to say — the lessons, the illustra-

tions, the quotations, the scripture references, having everything arranged in a symmetrical and cumulative order. The mere vestment of the thought is all that we leave to the occasion. It is well, too, to determine beforehand the exact language for the first few sentences, and for the closing paragraph. Sometimes our best thought will come to us in the glow of public discourse. If so, let us use it; but it will not do for us to depend upon its coming.

Extemporaneous speech, then, is extemporaneous only as regards the language in which our thought is clothed. The ideas themselves must be carefully thought out beforehand, and such a sermon may require more real study than a written discourse. The minister who writes out two sermons for Sunday is apt to do a lot of extemporaneous writing. We must, as far as we can, habitually associate with cultivated people, whose tones, inflections and idioms are pure and refined. While we do not write the sermon we are going to preach, we keep our pen wet, day by day, endeavoring to produce other literature of permanent value. I do not mean desultory letter-writing. Careful writing every day improves our style of speaking, enriching our vocabulary, and promoting a habit of nice discrimination in the choice of words. And we should let no day pass without our reading from some good author, familiarity with whose style cannot fail of improving our own.

Why should we shrink from preaching without notes? Public address is only expanded conversation, and if I have the audacity to present my unwrit-

ten views to a man alone in a parlor, why should I fear to address without notes an audience made up of individuals, and possessing generally less heart and conscience and intelligence than the individual has when he is alone by himself. Besides, you may safely assume that, in the nature of the case, you know more about the special subject you are treating than anyone else who is present, since it is a subject to which you have for several days been giving particular attention.

3. In order to attract and to hold the common people, our preaching must be copiously *illustrated*. Abstract truths must be presented in concrete forms. The listener will sometimes leave behind all the rest, and carry away only a single illustration. One good case in point will often save a sermon. Christ's teachings abound in parables and object lessons. This is why the common people heard Him gladly,

“ For wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.”

Some ministers hesitate to make use of a simple story in the pulpit. It seems to them undignified and out of character. But the story has its use. It saves the discourse from dullness. Only it should never be comical or irreverent, or lugged in, or long-drawn-out. A delicate vein of humor is admissible, especially such as often glimmers in a fresh and realistic reproduction of some scriptural scene, as a fish turns up his glistening side in a dark pool.

Christ's sayings are often best punctuated with a smile. Preachers are too shy of humor. They

“Suspect the azure blossom
That unfolds upon a shoot,
As if wisdom's old potato
Could not flourish at its root.”

But humor should never be introduced for its own sake, and it is easy to go too far on this path. “Well,” said a gentleman; “It is only a step from the sublime to the ridiculous!” “Ah,” replied his friend; “If it were only a step back again!” The illustrations should illustrate, and not so dazzle the eye as to obscure the truth we are trying to show. People often remember the illustration, but forget the lesson. The illustration must be apt, and the better it is, the harder it will be for us ever to use it a second time. Many a preacher is charming in the parlor or even on the platform, but phenomenally dull in the pulpit. He seems to have a genius for muffling his thoughts in holy tones and pious commonplaces. You wonder what has become of the delightful fellow whom you met on the tennis field. He seems to have stepped out at the back door. A minister should not make it a matter of conscience to leave out all the Attic salt from his Sunday discourses — the bright, homely illustrations with which his week-day conversations sparkle. If he could only learn in the pulpit to divest himself of his professional character and drop into the sweet, simple speech of the common people!

One must be on the constant watch for illustrations. The habit of observation becomes second

nature. We not only perceive objects and events but discern their moral and spiritual import. One soon learns to adopt and to use a comprehensive and workable system for gathering up and preserving stray thoughts, like Todd's Index Rerum. You read, with pencil at hand, some history, or biography, or scientific work, or book of travels, or magazine, or review, and when a fact occurs which has a homiletical value, you mark the passage and write down the number of the page on the fly-leaf of the book you are reading. Then, on completing the volume, you look up these passages, read them over again, and if they still seem to you worthy of preservation, you refer to them each on a single line of your Index Rerum, under some proper subject, indicating exactly the volume and page where they can be found again. In reading the Bible or some book of poetry, a sententious saying catches your eye. It may serve sometime as a quotation to clinch an argument, or to rivet your thought to the mind of your hearer. You write down the quotation in fine script between two lines of your Index Rerum, giving the chapter and verse. It requires good nerve to recite a quotation in public giving its exact words. The memory needs to be trained to this. And you may have to repeat a verse of Scripture or a passage of poetry over a good many times during the week, before you will dare to quote it to your audience in the excitement of preaching. But such quotations have a peculiar power over an audience. Especially the quaint old English of the Authorized Version, with its strange spell, will pro-

duce a hush throughout any congregation. In conversation, thoughts occur to you which you enter in your note-book for final preservation in your Index Rerum. Even Emerson, with his rare mental fecundity, used to practice systematic economy of this kind. He used to rise in the middle of the night to corral a stray thought. It is said that before his second wife got used to his ways, she would ask him, when he rose to strike a light, "Are you ill, husband?" "No," he would reply, "Only an idea." I fancy that if we were to inquire too curiously into the secret of the variety, freshness and spontaneity of such authors as Dickens, or Charles Reade, we would find it to lie in a rigid economy of resources, due to a system of treasuring up the odds and ends of thought which run through the ordinary memory as through a sieve. "To swallow one's disgusts," says Carlyle, "and do faithfully the ugly commanded work, taking no counsel with flesh and blood — know that genius everywhere in nature means this first of all; that, without this it means nothing,—generally less." In an address to students, Max Müller recommends Indexes as the chief armaments of a scholar's fortress. He says: "I still remember the time — if my memory serves me right — when Lobeck, in a controversy with Hermann replied with great complacency: 'Ah, but I have a better index to Phrynichus than he has.'"

In glancing through the daily paper or other ephemeral literature you will find items of interest that will serve to illustrate ethical and religious

principles. Facts, events, incidents, and brief poems, sometimes of a high order, catch your eye for an instant, and then pass away never to return. We need a scrap-book and ordinary letter-file, the former for the little pieces, the latter for larger extracts. In this way much valuable matter is filed away for future use, and can easily be found again, if adequate reference is made to it in the *Index Rerum*.

Said a Persian sage: "I will drink up the ocean, if you stop up the rivers flowing into it," and the average congregation will exhaust the minister's reservoir of thought, unless it is being ceaselessly fed by countless rills. The silkworm is sometimes afflicted with an intestinal parasite, and then it will go through all the processes of spinning without producing silk. If we do not keep our minds constantly stored with fresh thought, we shall soon find ourselves going through the same pathetic round of fruitless effort—the spirit praying, but the understanding remaining unfruitful. The system I have described will help to keep our reservoir full. Streams will flow into it from domestic, social, and pastoral life, from history, from nature, from literature, from the Bible, from the daily press. The minister, like the black bass, should roam far and wide for his food. His illustrations should not all be of one kind. They should indicate a large range of thought and reading. The streams that feed his mental life should drain a wide territory.

In using the thoughts of other people, one must take great pains to give ample credit. The raw

facts of science and of history are common property. If I take a fact and draw a lesson out of it, unveiling its inner spiritual meaning, it becomes my own. It has passed through the mill of my own thinking, and bears the stamp of my own individuality. If someone else has drawn a moral lesson from it, I cannot use that lesson without giving him credit. Otherwise, I am guilty of plagiarism, though the thought be clothed in my own language. The mention of other thinkers gives interest to a sermon. People prick up their ears when they hear a proper name. It will produce a silence in any audience. You are reinforced in your own position by the authority of another. Your people become acquainted with different authors, to the enlargement of their own mental horizon. They do not think less of their minister, for his evident familiarity with good literature. A listener will sometimes buy a book on the strength of his pastor's allusion to it.

Thought embodied in highly organized literary forms, as in poetry, essays, orations, sermons, and the like, is of less use to a minister than historical and scientific works that contain the raw material for illustration. Such thought must be carried over bodily in the form of quotation. Poetry has great inspirational value, but is of little use in sermons except as it is quoted. I would not read beforehand a sermon by Robertson upon a subject which I proposed to treat. Otherwise, the sermon would be sure to take its color from that most suggestive preacher. And there are certain themes

which he so preached upon that no minister can help running into his grooves, as, for instance, *Elijah, under the Juniper Tree*. Let us learn to be hospitable to thoughts from every quarter, and then so steep them with our own individuality that our sermons will be distinctly our own, and not simply foreign importations.

You should frequently — perhaps as often as once a week — look through the treasures you have stored up in the past, familiarizing yourself with your *Index Rerum*, checking off what you have already used, and seeing if you can find any illustrations to brighten up next Sunday's sermons. In this way, a thought which you found years ago will exactly fit into the niche of the present exigency. Each sermon becomes, in a true sense, the product, not of a few days' study, but of wide reflection covering many years. At a time of languor and dullness, you will be able to utilize the gleaming results of better moods.

“ We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.”

The question arises how far *visual instruction* is admissible in the pulpit. We are all children of a larger growth, and never tire of looking at pictures. Accordingly, many advocate the use of the black-board, pulpit paintings, and the stereopticon. The idea has a certain fascination, and one cannot help

hoping that ways may be devised of reaching the soul through the eye without sacrifice of dignity and reverence. But one must move cautiously along this path. The danger is that the mechanical details needful for success in such adventures will absorb the minister's time and cause him to neglect his study. In our attempt to give it vivid expression, we let the thought itself become impoverished. Besides the spirit of reverence is sensitive to environment, and can hardly survive amid the uncanny shadows and sounds of the stereopticon. But, if, in spite of these risks, one has sufficient hardihood to try such an experiment, let him begin in the hall, rather than in the church, and let this new form of service not displace the regular worship, but let it occupy a place of its own, as an extra attraction. Otherwise, you discredit your ordinary appointment, confessing its failure and making return difficult, if not impossible. We have found the stereopticon very effective at the Gospel Meeting of a week-night, illustrating with it the Life of Christ or Pilgrim's Progress. In addressing children also, one feels the need of the object lesson or the blackboard illustration.

4. It hardly need be said that the sermon must be *intelligible*. The minister must form the habit of clear and luminous thought. Greatness is usually simple. Higher education, instead of disqualifying men for addressing masses, is just what we need to make our thought plain. An ignorant man is sure to muddle his meaning. The superficial may perhaps mistake obscurity for depth, and fancy that,

because we are simple, we are shallow. It is said that Balzac used to write with intentional abstruseness, that his puzzled reader, not being able to fathom his meaning, might say to himself: "Great man, Balzac; he knows more than I do." But preach intelligibly, at the risk of depreciation at the hands of those who are not intelligent enough to form an independent opinion, but must suspend judgment and look hopelessly around until some oracle speaks. The judicious will always be grateful for clear statements. The plays of Shakespeare were produced by him not as works of literature, but to be acted upon the stage before popular audiences. Hence their transparency. We create our own difficulties. We read hard meanings into his words. The most obvious interpretation — the one that would occur to a plain looker-on, is usually the right one, and gives the thought that Shakespeare had in his own mind. Profound and recondite expositions are generally of our own making. An unlearned man, to whom was given a copy of Shakespeare with explanatory notes, remarked that he had no difficulty in understanding the text, and hoped that by hard study, he would be able to master the explanations. One of the canons in the interpretation of the great dramatist is that our first glance is surest, as in shooting with a rifle.

It should be so with sermons. The thought should be presented in crystalline forms. It is no sign that a stream is deep, because you cannot see to the bottom. It may be shallow and muddy. Much of the modern preaching needs to be translated into

the plain speech of everyday life. Handwriting, if too ornate, becomes illegible. We tire of fine rhetoric. We wish our author would drop into simple homely phrases. Norman MacLeod, while visiting Canada, once preached in a little backwoods church, where there was no settled minister. When church was over, an old man who stammered implored him to send the church a minister: "We d-d-don't expect a v-v-very c-c-clever man, but would be quite pleased to have one who could g-g-give us a p-p-plain everyday s-s-sermon *like what you g-gave us yourself to-day.*" A vote of thanks was once given to Macaulay for having written a history that workingmen could understand. Dr. Archibald Alexander, of Princeton, used to preach sometimes in a school-house where services were kept up by the students. One Sunday he preached a crystalline sermon in which the result of years of thought was presented in simplest form. His hearers were delighted. One of the farmers said: "I like that old man. He is not learned like those Seminary fellows, but I could understand every word he said."

In fact, our preaching is too much weighted with theological terminology. It is as when some old sailor spins a yarn, interlarding it with so many nautical phrases that a landsman is completely befogged. Our preaching wants translating. A preacher never loses his charm who knows how to elucidate the theology of the schools in the language of the streets.

5. Preaching, to impress the common people,

should have a *positive* tone. The trumpet must give no uncertain sound. What we say should proceed from intense conviction. People do not want our theories or speculations. They look for broad statements, and become impatient when we pare down our thought with too nice distinctions. The main outlines are all that they have time for — “the Colossus, hewed out of the rock, and not the carved cherry-stone.” The secret of a certain French physician’s power was said to be *that he affirmed*. “I will take any man’s convictions,” said Goethe, “but pray keep your doubts to yourself; I have enough of my own.”

Lord Coleridge advises English clergymen not to grapple with questions which they do not understand. He says: “Sermons or speeches which are not thorough, and in which imperfect argument is eked out with feeling and devotion do more harm than good. Whereas a man by leaving the whole matter alone, and insisting on the spiritual needs of man, and the spiritual help which the Christian Religion gives him, can at least do no harm, and with many natures may do infinite good.” It is not so much a rotund orthodoxy that counts as a solid one. Soundness consists not in loosely holding a large body of doctrine, but in a firm grasp of a few essential truths. Do not try in your preaching to swing around the whole circle of theology, but rather offer those truths which you have yourself experienced, leaving some doctrines to hang up and dry. According to the old superstition, “Bullets must be dipped in the huntsman’s

blood to bring down the game." "It is my belief," writes Carlyle, "that if the turbulent people could once be brought to know someone who really believed for himself the eternal truths, and did not merely tell them of someone else who in old time was *thought* to have believed them, they would all be reduced to speedy silence."

An orthodoxy which is external and does not saturate us to the very bone is of no use. Conan Doyle describes an old sailor "who was covered from head to foot with the most marvelous tattooings, done in blue, red and green, beginning with the Creation upon his neck and winding up with the Ascension upon his left ankle. He was wont to say that had he been drowned, and his body been cast upon some savage island, the natives might learn the whole of the blessed Gospel from a contemplation of his carcass. Yet this man's religion appeared to have all worked into his skin, so that very little was left for inner use." Truth that goes into us only skin deep simply makes us repulsive. People are very quick to discover whether we are preaching a thing because we believe it, or only because it is the thing to preach. Do not preach a doctrine that you believe only while you are preaching it. A minister said to me that he had to preach about hell once in a while, *so as to keep on believing in it*. George Eliot profoundly remarked concerning Savanorola: "His faith wavered, but not his speech; it is the lot of every man who has to speak for the satisfaction of the crowd, that he must often speak in virtue of yesterday's

faith, hoping it will come back to-morrow." It is better not to speak at all than to say what we only half believe. Even a commonplace becomes a formidable projectile, when it is heated red-hot in the fire of our own conviction. Professional and make-believe theology is like the filling which an unskilled dentist hammers into a hollow tooth, without having first properly fitted the cavity underneath it. All the time the decay of doubt is eating its way down towards the throbbing, remonstrant nerve.

Let us try to find out what we truly believe and preach that alone in a positive and constructive way. We may do more harm than good by attacking false systems of thought. We advertise an error by preaching against it. The assaults upon religion, like all offensive warfare, are much more interesting than its defense. People will keep awake while you are stating the argument of some brilliant infidel, and fall asleep before you get in your reply. In this way they take the poison without the antidote. The way to discount an error is to hang up alongside of it the corresponding truth. An old verger at Oxford, where the University sermons are almost exclusively of an apologetic character, once said: "I have heard all the sermons here for the last fifty years, and, thank God, *I believe in Christianity still.*"

And while we do not attack false systems, let us not emphasize our own doubts and heresies. At some one point you find yourself a little in advance of your church. They will catch up with you; do not fear. You need not devote all of your time to

preaching about the pet truth which you have freshly discovered. You will be tempted to do so; for if we vary even a little from the standards at any one point, we are sure to incur criticism and attack. The danger is that, in defending ourselves, we shall be led to devote disproportionate thought to this one phase of truth. And so our preaching will become unsymmetrical. The truth is seen out of its perspective. The one point of disagreement assumes undue importance in our minds, and we pass lightly over all the other doctrines in which we are at one with our fellow-Christians. Many a man has worked himself out of the Communion, to which, by good rights, he belonged, because unconsciously he fell into the habit, in his public deliverances, of harping all the time upon some one variant chord of doctrine, instead of giving due and proportionate emphasis to the many other truths, regarding which he and his brethren were absolutely in unison. This does not mean that you should not boldly state your position of dissent, even at the risk of martyrdom; but, having stated it, let it alone until you come round to it again in the great cycle of truths that make up our common Christianity. If your opinion is true, people will in the end find it out. The church has a habit of laying doctrines up on the shelf, and then forgetting to take them down again. The roughness of the trunk of a tree sometimes seems to be due to the fact that the trunk outgrows the bark, splitting it into seams, as a growing boy bursts his jacket. You can see where the opposite edges of the bark correspond to each

other, like parted lips. It is not strange that the church with its expanding life should burst the integument of its credal statements, and that our theologies should require gradual remoulding. But if our preaching is negative in its character, occupying itself too exclusively with those phases of doctrine which the church is sloughing off, it soon becomes cynical and repellent. When Froude published a bitter and sceptical volume entitled, "The Nemesis of Faith," Carlyle made the unfeeling remark: "He should burn his own smoke and not trouble other peoples' nostrils with it."

6. But however positive our preaching may be, let it always be *persuasive*. From the instant he enters the pulpit let the minister beam with good-nature. With every look and gesture, let him conciliate his people and take them into his confidence. To do this, he should be in good physical trim. During the week before, he ought to have had his day of rest, or else two half-days. On Sunday, like a true vicar, he works that others may rest. But he, too, needs his day of recreation. I remember a hard-worked assistant pastor saying once that he was glad there was only one *day of rest* during the week. When we come before our people, we should have a good night's rest behind us and a good breakfast within us. Bodily weakness will betray itself in irritability of manner; and no one makes allowance for the minister.

And when the duties of the day are done, there will come an hour of sweetest relaxation. We must be visible then only to our

dearest and most judicious friends. Others will be sure to misjudge us. The solemnity and tenderness of the day will be followed by moods of abnormal frivolity. To the unsympathetic and the unwise our gaiety will seem strange and the impression which our ministrations have made upon them will be weakened. It does not surprise me that after Philip had preached the gospel to the Ethiopian, he was caught away and found at Azotus. Perhaps it was because, his work being done—his sermon preached, his convert baptized,—he might have spoiled it all by remaining longer in the same place. Is this why some ministers disappear from the pulpit so mysteriously, after the sermon? Do they fear that the personal touch may dispel the impression made by their discourse? However this may be, let the minister so care for his body that when he enters the pulpit no physical weakness or discomfort shall disturb the serenity of his deportment.

Let his movements be deliberate. The impressiveness of any religious ceremony is marred by haste. "What were those books you had with you in the pulpit?" said an actor once to a minister. "Why those were the Bible and Prayer-book." "Oh, I thought, from the way you threw them about, they were the day-book and the ledger; and what engagement was it you had to meet at the close of the service?" "I had no engagement." "Why, I inferred you had from the way you hurried through the worship."

Deliberateness of movement is refreshing and restful to an audience. A slight pause at the

beginning of each new act of worship secures the attention of the people and helps them to concentrate their thoughts. Especially before announcing the text, and before the first sentence of the sermon, a slight pause will produce a hush in an audience, and enable every hearer to catch the opening words. If you get a man's attention at the very beginning, you can keep it to the end; but, if he loses your first sentence, he becomes disheartened, and will not try to follow you through. For this reason a bright illustration or striking thought at the very outset has a peculiar value. On the strength of it, the hearer will patiently wade through considerable dullness, in the hope of another. And let the first words of the sermon be deliberately spoken so as to be caught by the dullest and most distant ear. How few ministers can be easily heard in the back seats! The secret of being understood is not loudness of tone but deliberateness and distinctness of utterance. It is a good plan to select some listener farthest away, and make a point of pitching your voice in such a way as to be sure and lodge it in his ears.

Let the speaker stand firmly on his legs, neither with a timid air nor with the pose of a gladiator. Let him be like a gentleman in the parlor, erect, without military stiffness. Let the weight of the body rest mainly upon one foot, which should be a little behind the other. During the Scripture reading, prayer and sermon, learn to stand without touching the pulpit or reading-desk for support. Stand before the audience as on an

empty stage, without shelter of any kind. It is well to take up the Bible or hymn-book, when you read, so as not to lounge over the desk, or read into the book. Look your people in the eye, but with a kindly glance neither timorous nor defiant, with a smile of sympathy and good-will. Some ministers gaze at the floor, or at the distant corners of the room, or at the space above the heads of the people — anywhere except into the faces of their listeners. The kindling eye and receptive face of an auditor will sometimes be the very making of a sermon. You have once in a while a hearer so sympathetic and responsive that he ought almost to receive a salary as assistant pastor; and you lose all of this if your eye wanders. An old actor was asked if he ever felt nervous on the stage. He replied: “On the first night, invariably; I remember playing one night at the utmost disadvantage; wasn’t feeling well; house was light, and I did not care much for the play. Suddenly I caught the face of a ten-year-old boy in the audience who was crying. That inspired me, for I felt that I had inspired him. I played to that little fellow all the rest of the evening.”

The sermon will be more persuasive if the minister learns how to keep in close sympathetic relation with his audience throughout the whole service. Some preachers are dull and listless until the sermon begins, as if all else were of no account. In singing, we ought to rise with the people and the choir, and that too before the organ has finished the prelude, so that all will be ready to begin to sing

together. And when the congregation sits down, it is well to sit down with them, pausing a moment before the next act of worship, the organ playing softly. In announcing the hymns, or responsive readings, give the people ample time to find the place. Listen appreciatively to the anthem which the choir has taken the pains to prepare. People will listen more sympathetically to your sermon, if they find that you take an intelligent interest in the part which others contribute to the impressiveness of the service. During the rest of the worship, do not betray by whispering, by a preoccupied look in your eye, or by cold and absent-minded behavior that you regard the sermon as the only thing of importance in the service. Do not deserve George Eliot's sneer: "Practically, I find that what is called being apostolic now is impatience of everything in which the parson doesn't cut the principal figure."

Let us not fancy that vehemence is a part of persuasiveness. Violence of manner rather awakens suspicion of our sincerity. We instinctively cover the weakest links in our arguments with strenuous declamation. When we have our misgivings, we try to reassure ourselves and others by making a noise. A hollow note seems indeed to be rather taking, especially in a great town. People enjoy being hood-winked, and never tire of it. There is a kind of scintillating quality that catches the eye, like scraps of tin hung up in a cherry tree. When a man's thought grows thin, he is apt to lay on the paint of rhetoric all the

thicker. Soldiers on the stage, by constantly moving in and out make upon the spectators the impression of a large army, and the poverty of our thought seeks to disguise itself beneath lurid rhetoric and strained declamation. But this is bad art. Its success will prove ephemeral. According to Amiel: "Napoleon with his arms crossed over his breast is more impressive than the furious Hercules beating the air with his athlete fists." Let us not mistake perspiration for inspiration.

Good temper is an important ingredient in persuasion. Let the minister, of all men, keep sweet. With him, irritation in public is a sin past atoning. He often has good enough cause for losing his temper. But let him be like "a volcano covered with snow." "Our tongues are like triggers that have usually been pulled, before general intentions have been brought to bear." Some people will stretch your forbearance to the utmost. They do not hesitate to probe your most sensitive place. They are like the old western trapper, who being asked why he indulged in the practice of shooting Indians replied that *he liked to see them jump*. But "Love is not easily provoked." Preserve an imperturbable good nature. A man never loses his temper in public, without being sorry for it ever afterwards. One of our best New York ministers was driven out of the city by a woman's cough. Her cough interrupted one of his most eloquent passages. He betrayed irritation. The papers got hold of it. "It is a pity if a person may not cough in church." We never retract a fault when it once gets into print.

The world is a whispering gallery. The echo of that innocent cough would not die away.

In spite of every safeguard, disturbances will occur during public worship. By a kind of irony in Providence, something funny will come up just at the most solemn moment. And worship is a sensitive plant, wilting at the slightest touch of alien thought. How true to nature is the episode in Goethe's great drama, where Faust's solitary meditation on the opening sentences of St. John's gospel is interrupted by the uneasiness and clamorous howling of the black poodle in which Mephistophiles is ensconced! How often is the tender solemnity of worship rudely dispelled by some incongruous incident! A baby cries. Speak gently. Put yourself in the place of that over-worn mother who has brought her infant to God's house in quest of a blessing for herself and the babe. Encourage mothers to bring their little ones to church. A kindly sympathetic remark will capture the hearts of your audience, and they will take up the broken thread of your discourse with new zest. Inattentive and restless boys and girls are a fruitful source of disturbance in Divine worship. Reprove them affectionately if the occasion requires. Better still, see to it that some older person of kindness and judgment sits near the children to keep them in order. You are annoyed, perhaps, by seeing people sound asleep during your homily. Don't begrudge them the little respite from care that God gives them in His house. Rather thank Him silently for the fulfillment of His word: "He giveth His

beloved sleep." Consider that sleep is the sweetest creature comfort given to man. It is so scarce! In a great city there seems hardly enough of it to go around. To disturb sleep in one's family is accounted a domestic crime. It is not out of disrespect to yourself or want of interest in your sermon that your listener nods. It is his infirmity. He has been working hard in the open air, and finding himself in a warm, quiet place cannot keep awake. Think how good children are when they are asleep. Remember the words of the disciples: "Lord, if he sleep he shall do well." Consider, if the offender is a deacon, what a mute but eloquent witness his sleep is to your orthodoxy. His slumber is sound, because your doctrine is sound. Let such reflections as these calm your irritation, and soothe your wounded pride.

It is difficult to view with a quiet eye the numerous slight aberrations that mar the beauty and smoothness of Divine worship. But scolding will do no good. Irony, that sure sign of a troubled heart, only causes resentment. By it, we generate just enough friction at many different obscure points to bring about in the end the defeat of our whole undertaking. Kindness is the most effective lubricant. Instead of blaming a fault, praise its opposite. Do not scold those who come late to church, but thank those who come early. Speak of how pleased you were to observe that one of your members found the place in the hymn-book for a stranger. Judicious appreciation is a most effective remedy for the evils that infest everything good. A Parisian pho-

tographer does not say to a lady who is sitting for a picture: "Look pleasant now if you please," but, "It is quite unnecessary to ask madame to look pleasant — she could not look otherwise." Indeed the persuasiveness of the sermon will depend upon the persuasiveness of the preacher. His whole life and bearing will be conciliatory. He will begin to persuade from the moment he enters the pulpit. All depends upon the man himself. "What you are," says Emerson, "thunders so loud that I cannot hear what you say."

7. The sermon should not only be *expository* and *extemporaneous* and *illustrative* and *clear* and *positive* and *persuasive*; let it also be *brief*. Stop, just before the people have had enough. A brakeman said about a discourse that he had heard the day before: "It was a good sermon, but it had poor terminal facilities." An old judge, when asked how long a sermon should be, replied: "Twenty minutes, with a leaning to the side of mercy." People never forgive a lengthy preacher. They cherish a feeling of personal injury. They never cease to cast it up to him. You seldom hear a minister complained of for being too brief. Very few know when to leave off. Especially when we are preaching poorly, we go floundering along hoping to come to something before we are done. Little girls in the sewing-school, when they come to the end of a seam, look up and say: "Stop me, teacher." Happy the people whose minister knows how to fasten off the thread of his discourse at the end of the seam! Observe the dictum of Horace: "Whatever you

teach, let it be brief; that docile spirits may swiftly receive your words and faithful ones retain them."

II. Having considered the general character of the sermon, let us study the process of its production.

1. And more important than the preparation of the *sermon* is the preparation of one's *self*. A sermon will grow itself, out of a mind and heart that are thoroughly tilled. Let there be a symmetrical development of the whole man.

(a.) The *physical nature* should not fall into disrepair. Sleep well. Eat well. Take plenty of exercise. When the apostle wrote: "Bodily exercise profiteth little," he referred to the ascetic practices by which the religionists of his day thought to please God. Take a little well chosen gymnastic exercise in the morning as a part of your toilet. Let the movements be such as to bring into symmetrical play all the muscles of the body. They may be learned from any gymnastic director. This exercise need not consume more than ten or fifteen minutes. Our condition of undress is favorable for such work. If we let that chance slip by and are once appareled for the day, we never find time to make the change of costume requisite to comfort and pleasure in gymnastic exercise. Besides this, a half an hour, at least, every day ought to be spent in playing out of doors. The exercise should be violent enough to open wide the pores and produce copious perspiration. Then a bath and rub-down are very refreshing and beneficial. How delightful the glow we have when we conquer cold by means

of hard physical exercise! How much more enduring the feeling of warmth secured in this way than if we grew warm by toasting ourselves before a fire!

(b.) Again the minister is a *social* being. Part of the preparation of one's self for the sermon is to keep in close touch with one's fellows. Transcending all ecclesiastical partitions, the minister should associate with the best people of the town in which he lives. He will make much of home life, nor bring a preoccupied mind to his children. Even the innocent morning newspaper becomes a kind of domestic insulator at the table. Our power to win souls will be measured by our capacity to inspire confidence and affection. Our personal habits are a large factor in our social make-up. People will not stop to correct our faults of manner; they will simply fight shy of us. Practice economy. Save a little every year. Keep out of debt. Preserve your independence, or else you will forfeit the respect of your fellow-men, and put it out of your power to do them any good. Attention to the minutest details of toilet is requisite. Otherwise, we become physically repulsive to people of sensibility and good breeding, and lose all influence over them. "One sees why it is often better for greatness to be dead and to have got rid of the outer man." Refined manners at the table and in the parlor, scrupulous observance of the countless little conventionalities of civilized life, tender regard for the feelings of those of low degree, a nice sense of honor that keeps without fail every promise and engagement, such a deference for

others that we will not monopolize the conversation, or talk shop, or tell old or pointless or irreverent stories, or speak unkindly of the absent, especially of our brother ministers, these form a part of that culture without which good sermons cannot be produced. Manners stand in close relation to morals, and the teacher of religion should be a kind of Arthur Hallam:

“And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.”

(c.) Healthy *mental* fibre is requisite to the production of a sermon. The Sunday's deliverances should be simply the exudation of a richly nourished mind. The minister should have culture, defined by one of its most illustrious modern apostles as “the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit.” When we think what this involves we feel almost like giving up in despair. But we recall Christ's inspiring words: “Are there not twelve hours in a day?” All that is required of us is to fill up the time with happy, useful toil. We are hired by our Master to work not by the piece, but by the day. And when we consult our pillow at night, we should think not of what we have achieved, but that every hour has been filled with service. This thought promotes sound sleep. Indeed, how simple is the minister's life, if he is content with the church as his lever in uplifting humanity! Through his church he can reach the

uttermost parts of the earth and perpetuate his influence through all time. Let him magnify his office. Let him work his church for all it is worth. Life for these two—his church and his home—will afford him the amplest opportunity for the development of himself and for the redemption of mankind.

The pastor will usually occupy his forenoons in study, his afternoons in visiting, his evenings in worship or social and domestic recreation. The very difficulties of his situation possess fascination, and help him profitably to while away the time. If he can pass two hours a day in sermon study, one hour in solid reading, one hour in light reading, one hour in literary work, one hour in desultory writing, two hours in pastoral visitation, one hour in walking or gymnastics or outdoor recreation, reserving the evenings for a religious service or other social pleasure—all this, exclusive of time spent in private and domestic devotions, and reserving one day a week or else two half-days for rest and recreation—he can certainly lie down at night with the delicious sense of duty done. The execution of such a plan as this is surely not beyond the reach of the average man. If he shuts himself up in his study from half-past eight till one o'clock, he will find himself a long way on the path of carrying out this program. It is said that the Italian poet, Alfieri, used to have himself tied into his library chair and left for a certain portion of time each day at his library table, having previously instructed his servants not to release him before the expiration of his appointed hours of study. Lock yourself in

your study certain hours every day, and give yourself uninterruptedly to reading, writing and thought. Do this faithfully year by year, and your reservoir of thought will keep full. You will even be conscious of reserve power. You will experience that fine *plenum* sensation which is so desirable in ventilation.

You need not worry over the success of your undertakings. All genuine social reform takes time. Dr. Chalmers, who used to preach with such passionate earnestness that sometimes white flecks of foam would fly from his lips, conceded in his farewell sermon to his people at Kilmany that he was not sensible that all the vehemence with which he had urged the virtues and proprieties of social life had had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of his parishioners. The slower the process by which your idea is transmuted into social crystallization, the more enduring and seminal will be the result. Keep alive long. Hold yourself in hand. Outlive your competitors. The two surest elements of success in any profession, especially in a large town, are longevity and good behavior. The great ends of life we reach not by straining directly towards them, but by coming at them, as it were, around a corner. If we occupy our time usefully and in such a way as to grow symmetrically in all our nature, noble achievement will come of itself; just as a tree does not try to bear fruit, but having more life than it knows what to do with, transmutes that life into fruit. Intensity of aim defeats itself.

It is surprising how many volumes one can get

through by simply reading an hour a day. Matthew Arnold writes as follows to his sister: The importance of reading, not light stuff to get through time, but the best that has been written, forces itself upon me more and more every year I live; it is living in good company, the best company, and people generally are quite keen enough, or too keen about doing that, yet they will not do it in the simplest and most innocent manner by reading." And in another letter; "If I were you, my dear Fan, I should now take to some regular reading, if it were only an hour a day. It is the best thing in the world to have something of this sort as a point in the day, and far too few people know and use this secret. You would have your district still and all your business as usual, but you would have this hour in your day in the midst of it all, and it would soon become the greatest solace to you. Desultory reading is a mere anodyne; regular reading, well chosen, is restoring and edifying."

And besides our reading we should keep our pen wet. We should spend an hour a day, at least, in writing. I mean literary work, aside from desultory correspondence. In this way we can address an audience far larger than could be reached by the voice. Patient toil, unmindful of results, is a long and subtle lever. The best work we accomplish we know nothing about; as the great humble bee flies from one gorgeous blossom to another, plunging his proboscis among the fragrant petals in eager quest of nectar, and is all unconscious betimes that he is dislodging and dis-

tributing the pollen requisite to cross-fertilization, and so promoting the production of new flowers, and making the wilderness blossom like a rose-garden.

“Forenoon and afternoon and night,—Forenoon,
And afternoon, and night,—Forenoon, and — what!
The empty song repeats itself. No more?
Yea, that is Life; make this forenoon sublime,
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,
And Time is conquered, and thy crown is won.”

(d). More important still than the physical, social and mental life of the minister, is his *moral and spiritual* growth. It is a remarkable thought of the poet, Horace, that; a covetous man cannot make poetry. “When once the rust of avarice and the love of pelf pervade the mind, can we hope that poems can be written worthy of being smeared with oil of cedar and kept in a polished chest of cypress-wood?”

The Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale “only wondered that Heaven should see fit to transmit the grand and solemn music of its oracles through so foul an organ pipe as he.” The minister may be, to a degree, exempt from temptation to the more robust forms of vice. But refined sins are no less destructive of character; they eat out the moral nature, leaving the mere shell of a man, to be crushed at the touch of grosser temptation. We find temptation at the two antipodes of life. If a man fails, he loses heart. He becomes mean-spirited and envious. Many a man entering the ministry full of promise has had his wing broken in his first pas-

torate, to live ever afterward a bleeding and fluttering life. If, on the other hand, he succeeds, he becomes vain. There is no living with him. We want to nail up the pulpit door, and keep him inside. He is so charming there, and so repulsive everywhere else. The thick incense of praise makes him dizzy. The manly and self-respecting, let him alone. His path is beset by flatterers. Weak natures, "silly women," Kingsley calls them, "blown about by every wind, falling in love with the preacher instead of the sermon, and his sermon instead of the Bible." Let no minister fancy that he occupies a position sheltered from the temptations that are common to man. He, too, has to learn for himself to live the life that is hid with Christ in God.

What we all need is the personal, habitual consciousness of the loving presence of the Great Companion. The Infinite God, revealed in Christ, has come within the reach of our thought and affection. Prayer becomes sweet and real, when we speak to God in Christ as to a friend. And the return voice in this tender and sublime dialogue is His Word contained in the Holy Scripture. Only in this way does Christ speak to us, not face to face, as He will by and by, but through a letter, as a father speaks to his child when at school. The Holy Spirit is Christ Himself spiritually present to us, reinforcing in us all that is good, and making plain to our dim eyes the teachings of His Word. We need to dwell in the consciousness of His presence and His love; and cultivate acquaintance with Him through prayer and the reading of

His word. Religion consists more in this personal communion with Him than in soundness of doctrine, æstheticism of worship, knowledge of the Bible, labors of philanthropy, moral endeavors, or anything else. The consciousness of Christ's presence which leads us to speak to Him in prayer, to listen to His word, is the root of all theology and ritual, pure behavior, and merciful deeds. In the little chapel at Brighton where Frederick W. Robertson preached, may be seen his memorial—a representation of Christ in the midst of the doctors. The inscription reads as follows: *They were thinking of theology; he was thinking of God.* This consciousness of God requires cultivation. "Friendship is an article," says Dr. Johnson, "that needs to be kept in constant repair." The mind is so pressed with things of sense as easily to forget God. We should be much alone with Him in prayer, communing with Him as friend with friend. And all our prayer will be pervaded by a spirit of intercession; as Aaron was commanded to bear the name of the Children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart when he went into the Holy Place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.

The Bible, too, will be our constant companion during these times of devotion. My own plan is to read the Old Testament through once a year, and the New Testament twice. The writings of the ancient Mystics, like Thomas à Kempis, and some of the devotional literature of our own day will be found helpful to meditation. Read the Bible for your own good, and not merely for the

benefit of your people. Let not the homiletical habit tyrannize over your devotional moods, making your own personal experience of divine things narrow and mechanical. In the constant effort to provide food for others, do not lose your own appetite; like some anxious housewife, who, bending over the hot stove in preparation of a dainty repast for others, loses her own desire for food, and leaves untouched the viands which her pains have made so pleasant to the taste of her guests. Let us ourselves share in the feast of good things which we spread for others. "Let us comfort them by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Let them which wait at the altar be partakers with the altar.

Personal communion with Christ, described by Himself under the figure of the branch abiding in the vine, is the secret of Christian character, which is more eloquent than any sermon. From this root come the fruits of the Spirit. Persistence, tranquillity, humbleness of mind, the self-effacement requisite to co-operation for noble ends, the capacity to love others with the love with which God loves us, in fine, all the graces that qualify us for Christian service, proceed from this source. We shall save others by first saving ourselves. Nor is this symmetrical self-development in body and mind and heart and soul opposed to the sublimest altruism, provided our ultimate aim is the good of others. When we give ourselves to humanity, there ought to be something to give. The mother robin must keep herself well-fed in order to have strength for the arduous task of

gathering nourishment for her hungry, clamoring brood. The end determines the character of the life. We should not hesitate to risk life itself at the call of duty. But the good soldier will not expose himself unnecessarily. By living ourselves in the slums, unless necessity requires, we may so enfeeble our health and starve our natures that we shall be of very little use to the slums. The well-being of life consists in the amplest and most symmetrical self-development, with an altruistic aim.

2. Only a few words will be needed regarding the preparation of the *sermon*. If the minister's own nature be thoroughly tilled in all its phases, physical, social, mental and spiritual, then the sermon will grow up of itself. Select both texts early in the week, by Tuesday morning, if possible. Having once gripped a text, do not let go of it to look for something else. Make up your mind that all Scripture is vital, and that the passage chosen has in it a lesson for your people, if you only have the patience to work it out. Dwell not in the twilight of indecision. Early in the week, settle down to the patient and leisurely study of the Scripture you propose to unfold on Sunday, nor leave it undecided till the last minute what you are going to preach about, and then, in feverish haste, like a student cramming for examination, crowd your work into Saturday night, a time when you ought to be quietly resting in the thought of your sermon being so far along that you can safely let it alone, to return to it with fresh zest on Sunday morning.

Having chosen a text, take up with it a liberal sod

so far along that you can safely let it alone, to return to it with fresh zest on Sunday morning.

Having chosen a text, take up with it a liberal sod of context. Make the whole passage in which your text is embedded the subject of your meditation. During the time set apart each day for direct sermon study, read your passage over carefully in the Authorized Version, in the original languages, if you can, and in the Revised Version, or other translations, all the time jotting down the thoughts that occur to you, and saturating your mind with the truths suggested by the text. Read commentaries on the passage. Begin with the more critical ones, like Meyer or Ellicott, that endeavor to arrive at the very ground meaning of scripture, so that your sermon will not grow out of a false exegesis. Then make use of commentaries which are more spiritually suggestive. Do not blindly follow even the most scholarly authorities. Think for yourself. Form an independent opinion on each point. Commentaries are of use, not so much for what they say, as for what they suggest. Keep ample notes during the week of the results of your study and meditation. Consult your pillow about the text. The last thought at night, or first one in the morning will sometimes have peculiar freshness and value. Study in a prayerful mood. The Holy Spirit is the best interpreter of Christ's thoughts. Consult books that will give you the historic setting of the Scripture which you have chosen. Lastly, go through your Index Rerum, or common-

place book, to see if you have any thoughts there that will throw light on your theme.

Towards the end of the week, you will find yourself in the possession of a mass of notes — thoughts that have occurred to you during your meditation. Brood over this stuff. Select from it what will be helpful to your people. Keep them in mind all the way through — their needs and sorrows and sufferings. Leave out a good deal that you have gathered. Arrange the rest in the simplest possible order. String your thoughts like beads on a thread. Keep copious notes for future use — the sermon out-line, the illustrations, scripture references. At the end of your study you will have a sermon — not always a very great one, but perhaps all the better for that. It will be a message from God, suited to the needs of those you know and love. Even a small cake if fresh from the griddle is always acceptable. You will at least have done your part. Leave the final effect with Him who says: “My word shall not return unto Me void.” The important point is not so much to win admiration and applause as to comfort Christ’s little ones, and to reproduce the old experience: “Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.”

“If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain, or help one fainting robin
Unto her nest again,
I shall not live in vain.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH.

*Worship — The Sunday Afternoon and Evening Services.**I. The Sunday Afternoon Service — the Sunday School.*

I. Definition. The Church meets on Sunday afternoon for the study of the Bible, children preponderating (in other words the Sunday school). The Sunday school may be defined as the church and congregation, especially children, meeting on Sunday for the study of the Scriptures. This form of worship should be placed on the high level of the Sunday morning and evening services. Let us not think of the Sunday school as a little church within the church — a toy engine running up and down on a side track of its own. It is the church itself, with its gearing adapted especially to work among children. In fact, the ordinary Sunday school is more closely modelled upon the meetings of the primitive Christians than is the gathering of saints for the Sunday morning preaching service. In those ancient apostolic assemblies on the first day of the week, they did not pay one man to interest and teach the rest. The more intelligent and spiritual taught the rest without pay, as is now done in the Sunday school. Only in this way can I account for its marvelous vitality. In many of the weakly churches, whatever

spiritual life they have goes mainly into the Sunday school. The vital juice of the church will be found there if anywhere. The church itself is often only a kind of atrophied attachment to a vigorous Sunday school. When the pastor leaves, the church declines; but the Sunday school goes on the same as before. It has an independent life which survives and even flourishes during a long pastoral interregnum. Is this because it conforms more perfectly to the apostolic conception of a church than the church itself does? How often in our own city do we see the strange spectacle of a large vigorous Sunday school attached to a declining, dying church — a healthy growing child, lying on the withered bosom of its aged grandmother. May it not be because the Sunday school has come to be truer to the primitive ideas of Christianity than the church? In fact, there is no spiritual justification at all for the Sunday school except as it is the church itself at study.

The pastor or the associate pastor in his place, should conduct the service in the Sunday school, the Superintendent being simply his Lieutenant or Orderly Sergeant, relieving him of the care of executive details. The two offices cannot clash. The Superintendent takes charge of the details of organization; the pastor performs the function of teaching through the teachers. On Sunday morning the pastor opens a passage of scripture to the people *en masse*; on Sunday afternoon he instructs the people *in classes*, by means of teachers he has met beforehand and taught not only the lesson, but how to

teach it. While in this form of instruction children naturally preponderate, all ages should be embraced, from the infant to those of declining years. It is a misfortune that the Sunday school should be so generally regarded as the children's church, so that boys and girls disappear from it upon leaving the public school.

The teachers should be nominated by the pastor and elected by the church, or an advisory board, representing the church. The offerings should go into the church treasury; and out of the church treasury the expenses of the Sunday school should be paid. When the church makes an offering for foreign missions or any other cause, the Sunday school should add its offering for the same cause to that of the church. When the envelopes are distributed in the church for current expenses or for missionary purposes, they should be distributed also in the Sunday school. The worshipper should have his option of putting his envelope in the collection plate, either at the preaching service or in the Sunday school. The same even pressure of musical instruction should be felt throughout the school and church, from the smallest child to the oldest saint. In every possible way the Sunday school should be identified with the church — the two coalescing in one organic body through which flows a common life-blood.

This conception affords the opportunity for an effective pastoral system. Let the pastor regard his Sunday school teachers as assistant pastors. Let him commit to their care the families represented in their

classes. Let the teachers call upon these families regularly, and report their condition to the pastor. He will then find his whole church and congregation divided into convenient groups of families, and the space between the calls that he makes will be bridged over by the calls of the teachers. Strangers will be visited, because families are in the habit of throwing their children out as feelers. The sick will not be overlooked. The whole church will become a compact social organism.

2. Method. The Sunday school session falls naturally into three parts — the *opening exercises*, the *lesson study*, and the *closing exercises*. The pastor should open the school, assisted by the Superintendent, who sits by his side. Sing only good tunes. A choir may be extemporized, singers being asked to sit near the piano.

Let the opening exercises be brief and crisp. When the lesson begins, the pastor drops the burden of responsibility on the Superintendent. He himself should not teach. He is supposed to have taught the teachers. If he burns his match in the afternoon, it will not light again in the evening. The Superintendent sees that each class has a teacher and each teacher a class. This will require much still-hunt beforehand. Substitutes may be drafted from the Bible classes, which should keep one week ahead of the rest of the school. Teachers cannot be secured by agonizing appeals from the pulpit. There must be a wise and discriminating selection of teachers. Often the best ones are those who shrink from the task and will never offer themselves on the

strength of a general appeal. Only through personal persuasion will they be brought to undertake the work. If you depend upon volunteers alone, you will have teachers with more zeal than knowledge. It is not easy to get rid of a poor teacher. An ill-taught class becomes a hot-bed to sprout young infidels in.

The closing exercises may be conducted by the pastor or Superintendent. Let the pastor address the whole school, giving, in a *sermonette* of five minutes, a single thought from the lesson, appealing to the eye with the black-board or some carefully chosen object lesson. While preparing himself to teach the teachers, and for his brief address at the close of the school, the pastor keeps himself in sympathetic relation with the vast army of Sunday school workers, and beside, he will often obtain a good subject for his Sunday evening sermon. Even if the pastor feels disposed to commit to others some of the definite tasks outlined above as his share of the Sunday school work, at least the whole school should be pervaded with his spirit and personality.

The closing minutes of the Sunday school are peculiarly favorable to evangelistic appeals, and often, by gentle and sensible methods, we can persuade children directly to accept Christ as their Savior, and to confess Him before men. We are too apt to think that the Sunday school is simply a place of instruction, where the child stores away truth for future use. And it is true that many seeds are sown which seem to be lost, but, hidden in the soil of a child's mind, will germinate in later years. One of Plato's friends humorously compared his teachings

to words that were frozen in the air, as soon as they were pronounced, and the next summer, when they were warmed and melted in the sun, the people heard what had been spoken in the winter. The Sunday school teacher by hard boring may deposit in the flinty heart a dynamite cartridge which years afterward the electric spark of some evangelist's sermon will explode. But, while this is true, we should not let slip the present opportunity of bringing little children to Jesus. It is sometimes said that even a child can be converted; it should be said that even a grown person can be. The nearer the cradle, as a rule, the nearer Christ. The most intelligent Christians are readiest to accept children. It takes only a slight obstacle to upset an infant who is learning to walk; it is easy, by the frosty breath of suspicion, to arrest the spiritual growth of a child.

Becoming a Christian is like crossing a river. The Jordan is indeed often used as an emblem of death, Heaven being the promised land. But the Jordan may be justly used, also as a type of conversion. Becoming a Christian, is crossing from bank to bank; passing from the worldly country to Immanuel's land. Now, if we follow a river up beyond its affluents, we find it keeps getting smaller, and at last it is only a silver thread, winding through the meadow. You have to part the grasses to find it. Like Jean Ingelow's streamlet,

“A tiny bright beck it trickles between.”

Only a step will take you across, and you may even pass from bank to bank without knowing it.

Child conversion is like that. The change of position is imperceptible, but there is a world-wide difference in the ultimate result. Now, suppose a person does not cross the river near its source, where it is so slender that the grasses interlace above it,—in other words, is not converted in childhood,—but travels along down the stream on the wrong bank, pursuing the natural course of the worldly life. By and by the river becomes wide and deep and arrowy. He says at last to himself, “I must cross the river.” He plunges in. The current twists him, and bears him down. He struggles on. He buffets the waves. At last he gains the opposite shore. Drenched and panting, but full of joy, he clammers up the bank. There he meets a person who crossed the river when it was a tiny stream, and has been long traveling down the right bank, in Immanuel’s land. These two people are sure to misunderstand each other. The one who has forded the stream lower down, will have a long and stirring experience to relate of the anguish he endured while wrestling with the flood, of the joy which he felt upon arriving at the bank, and which he can scarcely find words to express. The other, who crossed the stream near its source, will reply: “I never experienced anything of that kind. In fact, I hardly know the exact time when I crossed the stream.” Then the other may say, “Then you never have crossed the stream at all.” “But,” the answer will come, “I seem to be on the same bank you are on. I am conscious of forgiveness. I am living the Christian life. I love the people of God. His word is sweet

to my taste." "Well," the other will say, "that makes no difference. Unless you have passed through an experience similar to mine, you are not a Christian."

What a mistake this is! The fact is, that many of the best Christians in our churches crossed the stream in early childhood, and so cannot tell you the exact date of their conversion. Happy the church in which children are growing up, whose second birth follows close on the first! Blest the garden in which these tender plants are springing up like willows by the water-courses.

3. Advantages. Work among children possesses peculiar fascination and hope. They are impressible to the moulding touch of Christian influence. They are like the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain,—the newly unfolding leaf, not yet turned brown with the heat and dust of summer. It has been truly said that you cannot have the pearly dawn at noon-day.

"Childhood is the bough, where slumbered
Birds and blossoms many-numbered;
Age, that bough with snows encumbered."

Even a puny personality makes a deep dent on a child's mind. The scholar idealizes his teacher. I remember one of my own Sunday-school teachers whom in later years I found to be a very ordinary man, and I am surprised now to think how portentous he seemed to me in my childhood. Here is the true conservation of energy. A little effort pro-

duces so vast a result. I have worked much among broken-down men. How much of this work might have been saved, if, years before, someone had bent tenderly over their childhood! When a horse is beginning to run away is the time to stop him with least expenditure of force. Preventive work, however obscure and prosaic, is the most fruitful.

The Sunday-school enables us to deploy our workers. We are too much huddled in our churches; we get in each other's way. If you hold each teacher responsible for the spiritual care of even a small group of children, he feels the pinch of individual obligation. And besides, children lead the way to the hearts of their parents. They bear the truth from the church to the home. The Gospel will find entrance to a whole family through a little child. How much influence for good, or for harm, is involved in these young natures! A Frenchman on his way to the guillotine uttered this memorable sentence: "Even at this incomprehensible moment when morality, enlightenment, love of country—all of them only make death in prison or on the scaffold more certain—yes, on the fatal tumbril itself, with nothing free but my voice, I could still cry '*Take care,*' to a child that should come too near the wheel! perhaps I may save his life, perhaps he may one day save his country."

The Sunday school is the church with its face turned toward childhood. It is not the children's church. Happy the minister to whom children instinctively resort for sympathy, as a bird finds her

rest among the branches of some large tree; like Tennyson's ideal man:

“And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face.”

II. *The Sunday Evening Service.* On Sunday evening the church meets for evangelistic work.

I. General character. (a.) The Sunday evening service should be *radically different* from the Sunday morning service, not a faint reproduction of it—a sort of etiolated second rainbow. The audience should not be made up of the same individuals. We should try to reach an entirely different personnel. In our great towns there is a large class of people whose first venture churchward is made on Sunday night, and only when they have been more thoroughly civilized and Christianized do they become Sunday morning worshippers. I do not feel that I have a mortgage upon my own members for three services a day. I do not care to preach two sermons on Sunday to the same man. One sermon is apt to push the other out. I am not surprised at the experience of the theological student who said upon his return from a Sunday appointment, that “The people were *so carried away* by the morning sermon that they did not get back to the evening one.” If my people come, say to one preaching service and the Sunday school, I am quite content that they should spend the other third of the day either at home or listening to some other preacher than myself, or engaging in some other form of

Christian work than ours. There are those of us who will always remember with fervent pleasure the happy, restful Sunday hour spent at home. The fragrance of it has attended our steps through this cold world and reassured us, amid the sneers of skeptics, of the divineness of Christianity. Some will attend the Sunday morning service and the Sunday school. Others, with more taste for evangelistic work than for Bible study, will skip the Sunday school and, after coming Sunday morning, will reappear Sunday night. Others again will attend attend the Sunday school and the evening service. And there are those who will be on hand whenever the church door is open. There is in New York a large class of homeless people who will make the church their home, and who are never so happy as when gathered for worship, lingering in the place of prayer and fellowship until the lights are turned down, and then going only reluctantly away. Servants can come, perhaps, more conveniently to the Sunday school and to the Sunday evening service. By having three services on Sunday radically different from each other, you meet the varied wants of a heterogeneous community.

The danger is that if the attendance is small at our third service, we will try to whip the people to church for that occasion, when they have already come twice, instead of feeling put to our trumps, somehow to develop a new constituency out of the population around us. It is better to give up the third service entirely than to fall into a querulous or scolding habit. In fact, the church may not have

around it the requisite material with which to build an audience for the third service, or else it may not have sufficient vitality to work up the material within its reach, or else it may be too conservative to adopt the methods required for the more thorough tillage of its field. In such cases it is best to have only two services, letting the Sunday school take the place of the second preaching service, and having no service in the evening, except perhaps a prayer-meeting. You cannot increase the water-power of a stream by building new mills on its banks. In many places there is an unhealthy competition between the Sunday school and the second preaching service. There are not enough people to produce two different normally developed social entities, and you have a kind of double-yolked egg. If you build up one service you pull down the other.

(b.) The second preaching service should be *evangelistic* in its character. At the morning service the minister faces the saints; at the evening service he faces the sinners. The morning service naturally culminates in Communion, which symbolizes the progress of that Christian life which we live in mystical union with Christ and His disciples. The evening service naturally culminates in Baptism, which, in the minds of all Christians, is associated not with the progress of the Christian life but with its beginning. In the morning the main object is the edification of believers; in the evening the conversion of unbelievers. Evangelistic work may be defined as the effort to persuade people to accept

Christ immediately by faith and love, or if they are already believers, to confess Him before men.

This is an effort in which we should be engaged all the time. The church should know what it is to have a perpetual revival. At its meetings for prayer frequent opportunities should be given for people to accept Christ or to confess Him. What are commonly regarded as the marks of a revival? Saints renew their consecration, sinners are converted, secret believers confess Christ, wanderers are reclaimed. Now these various phenomena ought to characterize the normal every-day life of the church. It is a mistake for us to look for special periods of time during which exclusively sinners are converted, followed by seasons during which saints are edified. The two processes should go on side by side. The church should be like an orange tree on which you may see, at the same time the blossom, the green fruit, and the golden orange. The soil that is congenial to the germination of a tree is the best for it to grow in. The atmosphere best suited to the birth of souls is most favorable to their culture. The normal experience of the church is beautifully described in Leviticus, xxvi, 5, "And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage unto the sowing time." And in Deut., xi, 12, "A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." And in Amos, ix, 13, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plough-man shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth

seed." Our Lord taught the disciples that they were not to expect four months to intervene between seed-time and harvest in the spiritual world, but that the sower and the reaper should rejoice *together*. During an experience of eighteen years in New York, I have found Sunday night a most favorable time for the translation of souls from the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

But, while I believe, that the normal condition of the church should be one of perpetual revival, I would also, at some favorable season each year, make a special effort for the conversion of souls. There should come times of peculiar refreshing. Such a revival I would not define, in accordance with the etymology of the word, as a return from real or apparent death. Christ did not mean His church to be subject to alternations of life and death — "a constant interchange of growth and blight." A true revival is rather an acceleration of spiritual life. Nature, constantly at work all the time, nevertheless has her seasons when the fruit that has been long developing hastens to its maturity. Farmers are at work all the year around, but there come times of special effort, when the harvest must be gathered rapidly in. In the book of Acts we see how Christianity, in its earlier days, advanced by successive leaps. In our mission-fields, converts are gathered in groups. The fishing of the New Testament was with the net, almost never with hook and line. The consciousness of Christendom is true to her earliest traditions, in setting apart each year a time when we give ourselves especially to prayer. All the Com-

munions are coming to be at one in this. The Romanists and the Episcopalians have their Lent. The Methodist Episcopal church does not think of going through a winter without a protracted meeting, and Christians of other bodies attest the same deep-felt need by the Week of Prayer, which is often followed by special services. I have never passed a winter without holding a series of special services, rallying my church for evangelistic work. In every instance I have found the result good. You break the enemy's line of battle at the Week of Prayer; and then you keep picking up fugitives till the time comes for another special effort. No two revivals are alike; just as no two conversions are alike. We should not shape too exactly and arbitrarily the kind of blessing that we want God to bestow. Leave all that with Him. He is original in His ways with men. He never repeats Himself. But Christians cannot come together and pray and work for a special blessing without receiving just the blessing they most need. Expectancy is the great requisite. God never disappoints. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Evangelists are an ingenious and expensive device for awakening in a church the spirit of expectancy. Then the blessing comes. It would have come just the same without the evangelist, had the church only had the expectancy. It is not that the evangelist has more of the Holy Spirit's influence, or preaches a purer Gospel than Dr. John Hall, for instance, but that people have come to expect that a revival will attend his steps.

The pastor should be his own evangelist. The

professional evangelist of the day has his uses. Let him preach Christ among the unchurched masses, or standing by the pastor's side in some feeble church, let him build it up for a new career. When a number of strong city churches unite in sending for an evangelist to hold union meetings, the success is more apparent than real. Any central auditorium can be filled by the contingents of worshippers that assemble from the different churches united in the effort. There will be large audiences and enthusiastic meetings, but the residuum of definite, enduring result is usually small — quite incommensurate with the effort that has been put forth. Such evangelistic work is often followed by a reaction. When the evangelist steps ashore he is quite apt to push the boat only further out into the stream. A philosopher complained of the glue he bought that it held only as long as the agent was in the house. When the agent was gone the glue would not work. So there are people whose religion does not seem to work, except under the regime of some evangelist. It is to him that they look for comfort, and not to the pastor, who is an old story. In fact, spiritual fatherhood involves the duty of spiritual nurture. The evangelist has to leave his converts like foundlings on a doorstep, for someone else to bring up.

I would not care to be an evangelist. It is pleasanter to feed one's own family than a miscellaneous crowd. It is delightful to see the fruits ripening in one's own spiritual garden. Who does not remember how sweet the vegetables tasted which our own hands planted and tended. While the evangel-

ist keeps an accurate account of those who have been converted through his labors, he has no way of keeping a list of the thoughtful people who have been forever repelled from Christianity by his violent and often grotesque methods. Fish may be captured by the use of dynamite cartridges. You explode them on a sunken reef and they will stun all animal life within a hundred feet. In this way you can make a great haul of fish. The drawback is that you scare whole schools of fish away from those feeding-grounds. Where dynamite cartridges are used, fish soon become very scarce. Many evangelists lack pastoral instincts. They do not always try to strengthen the relations between the people and their minister. It is better for us to do our own evangelistic preaching. When we are holding services every night, our people will put up with old sermons. We can have some evangelistic attraction in the way of music or the like which will not, in the minds even of the more thoughtless, discredit the pulpit. This will bring within the reach of our voice those who do not usually go to church.

It is a mistake to suppose that the people will not do as much for the pastor as they will for an evangelist. I have known one of our best ministers to wait all winter for an evangelist to come, when, if he had had the courage to undertake special meetings, himself, he would doubtless have had better and larger results. We laboriously gather inflammable materials for a fire, and when they are all placed in order we simply neglect to apply the match. If a pastor

must have help from without, let him invite some brother minister to stand by his side. We ourselves ought to do more of this evangelistic work in aid of other ministerial brethren. Often when disheartened in my own field I have gone away and done the work of an evangelist for five days between Sundays, returning to my people with new faith and courage.

The method of evangelism which I have found most effective at the service Sunday night, and in fact, at any other meeting, is, by various depletions, to thin out the audience, gradually removing those who are tired or indifferent, and leaving behind only the inquirers and those Christians who want to linger a while for the sake of helping someone to find Christ. I do not have a separate inquiry-room to which the inquirers and workers repair, but I turn the audience-room itself into an inquiry-room by gradually weeding those out—members of the church or others—who take little interest in the service, and who, if they should remain, would only complain of the lengthiness of the meeting. Such Christians are of most use to the church when they are safe at home—*asleep in bed*. This leaves behind only the more earnest Christians and the sincere inquirers. You have then the climate favorable to the new birth. The Holy Spirit's presence may be always depended upon, when Christ is offered as a Savior to those who sincerely desire His salvation.

Beginning at half-past seven, I close the Sunday evening preaching service at a quar-

ter to nine o'clock. I want the people to feel that they have had a complete service ending with the benediction. The worship is crisper, brighter, more popular, more evangelistic than in the morning. When giving the notices I say that after the preaching service, we shall have a more familiar, social service of song, lasting for about fifteen minutes, to which all are invited. I arrange for this service to begin the instant the benediction is pronounced. The player is seated at the piano, the place of the hymn has been found, and two or three singers at least, are in front, ready to lead the congregation. Sometimes I have a violin or some such special musical attraction for this service. The benediction always has a strong, expulsive influence. It will throw people out of church almost like a catapult. Therefore, the instant the benediction is over, I give out the first hymn of the song service. And I see to it that it is an inspiring hymn. The people at first seem perplexed. One-third of the audience will retire, and the rest settle down for the song service. Then I come down from the pulpit and promote as best I can a prayer-meeting atmosphere. For a few minutes we sing and pray and speak. Then I make a brief evangelistic appeal, and try to persuade seekers and secret believers to give some sign of interest. Then while the closing hymn is singing, I slip through the congregation inviting those who have evinced any interest to remain for personal conversation with me after the service. In this work of personal invitation, I am sometimes helped by judicious Chris-

tians whom I have instructed beforehand to take a section of seats and to watch for people who give signs of interest. Then I close the meeting, and talk with those that are left behind. Some of my members are trained to do this personal work, each one endeavoring to point some individual to Christ or, at least, to hold him for a personal conversation with me. Sometimes I thin the meeting out again, and have still another after-meeting. A hymn is given out, during which those who are tired or live far away are permitted to withdraw. This will skim off perhaps a half of the audience. The meeting as it grows smaller becomes more interesting. Sometimes, having put someone in the chair to give out familiar hymns, I pass through the audience distributing some little floral tract, under cover of which I have a little personal word with those who may seem interested, trying to persuade them to show some sign of interest. At the very next opportunity, I do not find that these methods wear out. Seldom a Sunday evening passes without my discovering those who want to be pointed to Christ, or who, having found Him, desire to share in the fellowship of His people. (See Appendix, note 1.)

2. Church Music. Praise is the musical expression of the gratitude and affection which we feel toward God. It should never be thought of as merely incidental, something to fill in with. Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs in which we glorify our Blessed Lord remind us of our mercies and enkindle our hearts to love and gratitude and joy. Through her service of praise the church presents a

more joyous type of Christianity than in the rest of her worship, and thus attracts the world, especially the young, within hearing distance of the Gospel. Sacred music comforts the sadness of humanity. It is the best anæsthesia for mental pain, and

“gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tir’d eyelids upon tir’d eyes.”

No other human agency has such

“Power to mitigate and suage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain
From mortal or immortal minds.”

(a.) The Institutional Church should use the *best tunes*. Rich and varied harmonies should be wedded with sweet and clear melodies. We should have done with cheap and sensational music. Keep the musical standard high. Give people, not so much what they want, as what they need. I have found that the common people like to learn to sing the best music, and are only prevented from doing so by ministers and others who insist that they can appreciate nothing but trash. Some fine classical tunes have inadvertently crept into our sacred song-books like Bursley, Nicea, Eventide, Ewing, and the like. Have you not observed how eagerly the plain people take hold of such tunes, though at first they find them hard to learn? Give them a chance at classical music, and you will be surprised to find how quickly and enthusiastically they will learn the adaptations from great German and Italian composers, as well as the deep harmonies of the modern English school.

Music has become a part of our public education, and is filtering down to the lowest strata of society. Foreigners who come among us excel in musicianly quality and taste. The most unpromising people become interested in Barnaby and Dykes, Sullivan and Monk, Hopkins and Stainer. They like to sing what it is worth while to learn. The more difficult the piece, the more pride they take in mastering it. Only very sparingly would I use the ordinary sensational songs — only in outdoor meetings — sometimes in a mission service. Even this may hinder the process of education. You do not cure a man of the drink habit by taking him off on an occasional spree. Let us as rapidly as we can lead the people up from the lower plane of music — songs that sing themselves, rocking-chair melodies — to that higher level of true art which we can only enjoy at the expense of attention, effort, and intelligent sympathy.

True art does not *take us*, but requires us to *give ourselves*. It has been well said by Vernon Lee: “The art which takes and catches our attention the most easily, asking nothing in return, or next to nothing, is also the poorest art — the oleograph, the pretty woman in the fashion-plate, the caricature, the representation of some domestic or harrowing scene, children being put to bed, babes in the wood, railway accidents, etc.; or again, dance or march music, and aphorisms in verse. It catches your attention, instead of your attention catching it; but it speedily ceases to interest, gives you nothing more, cloy, or comes to a dead stop. It resem-

bles thus far mere sensual pleasures — a savory dish, a glass of good wine, an excellent cigar, a warm bed, which impose themselves on the nerves without expenditure of attention; with the result, of course, that little or nothing remains, a sensual impression dying, so to speak, childless, a barren, disconnected thing, without place in the memory, unmarried as it is to the memory's clients, thought and human feeling."

Sensational singing, like sensational preaching, gains immediate result, at the expense of the future. You raise money by putting a mortgage on your house. It is better to succeed more slowly. If your ideal in music is high, many people will complain, and inquire, "What are you giving us?" Like Shakespeare's Puritan, they want to "sing psalms to hornpipes." But be patient with them. In the end they will thank you that you bore with their petulance, and led them by a better, though a steeper path.

(b.) *Old tunes*, if they are good, have a peculiar charm. We cannot be all the time learning new tunes. Do not turn the church into a singing-school. The congregation has certain rights which even a minister is bound to respect, and one of them is that at every service at least one tune, perhaps the last one, should be absolutely familiar to all, so that the church shall resound with a vast volume of praise.

(c.) But while the people have a right to at least one familiar tune at each service, they should also be learning *new tunes* all the time. *Sing*

unto the Lord a new-made song. Otherwise, we drop into a rut, and keep singing over and over a few old hymns. It requires self-denial to give out a new tune in church. It is a weak point with us ministers that we want every number on our program to be equally good. It makes us nervous that any part of the worship should languish. And so we are slow to give out a tune that we are sure the congregation cannot sing. But how else can we learn new music? Some churches are in possession of a large and expensive hymn-book, a rich repertoire of classical, sacred music — and yet they will keep singing over the same fifty or seventy-five tunes. They might just as well have these hymns bound up into a cheap volume by themselves.

My plan is to select in the hymn-book, with the aid of my musical director, say ten fine unfamiliar tunes, marking them with the figure 1. I keep giving these out, one at a service, until they have been thoroughly learned. Then I take another contingent of ten new pieces, marking them with the figure 2; and so on. In this way, I develop the resources of the hymn-book. At every service the first of the three hymns will be somewhat familiar, the second entirely new, and the third well known to all. I do not endeavor to adapt the hymns to the sermon, except, indeed, sometimes the closing hymn. I like to keep the sermon in its place, being content to *preach* it without *singing* it or *praying* it. The new tunes we sometimes sing over at the prayer-meeting during the week before. The people become interested in learning the new hymns, and seeing them

pass successively from the category of the *entirely new*, to that of the *somewhat familiar*, finally becoming *well known to all*. I find, too, that the people easily learn to sing chants, if you only give them the opportunity; and there is no kind of singing that they enjoy more.

(d.) In order to inspire the people to sing and to keep them in time and tune, you need a *large, volunteer, chorus choir*.

I used to think that the choir ought to be in front of the people—behind and around and over the minister. But we have changed all that. I have grown more conservative. It seems to me more philosophical that in the praise of God the choir should not sing to the people, nor the people to the choir, but that all should face in the same direction. I find that the river of song flowing down upon the people from behind carries their voices along better in the congregational singing. Besides, it is difficult to arrange room for as large a choir behind the minister as in front of him. Again the members of my choir are among my best listeners, and how could I preach to them if they were behind me? Strange as it may seem, I have succeeded, in the course of my ministry, in persuading one musical director to join the church, also an organist; and this is no easy task. Not that artists are bad people. I have found them very good. I would rather associate with them than with anybody else. But with artists, too often, their art is their religion and, besides, musicians in church are necessarily so absorbed in attending to the details of the

worship that they hardly have leisure to listen to the truth for themselves. In this respect they are almost as much deprived of the Gospel as the minister himself, of whom the people strangely expect an extraordinary amount of good behavior, although he almost never hears a sermon, except indirectly from his own lips. I have sometimes thought there ought to be a society for propagating the Gospel among ministers. Public functionaries in the church are not easily impressed with spiritual things. Did you ever hear of the conversion of an undertaker? Now, if your choir is behind you, it is not easy for them to become interested in your preaching, and you must not think it strange if they sometimes whisper, or even silently withdraw from the gallery during the sermon, to return in time for the closing hymn.

Then if the choir and congregation front each other, telegraphic glances will be frequently exchanged between them. You will have to be unusually rich in personal magnetism if, while you are preaching, you can so rivet the attention of all your listeners, that the eyes of none of them will ever wander away to some bright face in the gallery above. I heard Mr. Henry M. Stanley lecture once on "Darkest Africa." He was introduced by Mr. Beecher, who remained on the platform during the lecture, and even while Mr. Stanley was telling the most thrilling stories of his adventures my eyes could not help wandering away from him to rest upon the expressive face of Mr. Beecher, framed by his shock of

snowy hair. It is a mistake for ministers to expose themselves to the risk of a counter-attraction.

Again, there are singers who will more readily join the choir when they can slip into it behind the congregation, and not expose themselves to public view before all the people. These are some of the reasons why I have put the singers behind the people, building at the front of our main auditorium a choir gallery ample enough to seat one hundred and fifty singers.

You need as musical director, a man of severe taste, sound judgment, intense magnetism, tireless patience in drill, and consummate executive ability, —reverent, amiable, tactful and devoted to his art. You do not employ him merely to sing, but to produce and maintain a great, complicated social organism. He should be a teacher of vocal music; and it will be a great help to him if he can have as the core of his choir a few of his own pupils. In the case of singers of promise, with limited means, it is wise for the church to pay for their lessons, in compensation for their services as singers in the choir. In this way your choir becomes a seed plot. As your singers become more proficient, they will find more remunerative positions elsewhere, and you will have opened the way for them to reach higher and more lucrative work. The best music should be sung, and this itself will attract good singers to your choir. The church becomes a kind of musical home for lovers of good music.

The singers should be Christians. The prime requisite for membership in the choir is not musical

proficiency, as you would at first suppose, but first and foremost, amiability.

The choir should sing an anthem at each service, the congregation being provided with the words of the anthem in printed form. Singers will join the choir just for the pleasure of learning and singing the anthem music, provided it is of a high order. You cannot expect them to come to rehearsal and spend an evening simply practicing hymns for the following Sunday. The anthem is like the first line of a copy-book, keeping before the congregation a specimen of what perfect singing is. The goal to be reached, however, is good congregational singing. Everything else must work to that end. This is not easily achieved. It is much simpler to hire four people to do your singing for you. But this method is mechanical and has very little educational value, except to the four singers themselves. We must keep at it until the whole congregation becomes a great chorus choir, singing the best music, and bringing forth out of its treasure tunes new and old.

There are many difficulties in the way, but the prize is worth striving for. The first difficulty is to get the congregation, and this is sometimes insurmountable. You cannot have congregational singing without a congregation. And when you have your congregation, it is hard to persuade them to sing. The best musicians will refuse to join their voices to indiscriminate singing. As in Nehemiah's time, "their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord." These choice singers keep

their voices as if in a band-box, fearing to spoil them by contact with the uninitiated. Congregational singing grates on their ears. They miss the delicate shading of tone and the nice balance of parts which characterize good quartet singing. On the other hand, the unmusical withhold their voices, fearing to make mistakes in time or tune. Many persons, too, have no interest whatever in the singing, and the musical part of the service is a bore to them. They sometimes even have the air of being in pain. Others again, feel too tired and sad to sing. All this impairs the congregational song. Its volume is diminished — one here and one there refusing to add his mite, filching by handfuls from that great offering of human praise which ought to go up to God. So slow and laborious a process is it to achieve good congregational singing in the ordinary church. Many years will slip away before you arrive at your goal. You may account yourself highly favored if your people suffer you to realize your ideal of congregational song, before your own ears will have become too dull through age for you to enjoy it to the full yourself.

The age of admission to the church choir should be sixteen. But you may have, besides, a junior choir, admitting children from nine to fifteen. They will reinforce the church choir in leading the congregational singing, and will sometimes, perhaps, sing a selection of their own. The junior choir will serve as a training-school from which children will be graduated into the church choir. The musical director will have supervision of both choirs, his

spirit and ideals influencing and pervading the whole congregation, from their childhood to old age. The pastor and the director should keep in closest touch. Though not musical, I like to attend the rehearsals, and some of my happiest hours are spent in the choir gallery.

CHAPTER V.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH.

Worship — Week-Day Services.

I. The Church Prayer-Meeting.

With us the Church meets on Friday evening for social worship, older people preponderating (in other words, the Prayer-meeting). The Prayer-meeting is the act of coming together at stated seasons in the church or elsewhere for the purpose of social, informal, and spontaneous worship. One person alone cannot have a prayer-meeting. There must be at least two or three gathered together. The word "meeting" in this connection does not involve the idea of a meeting between man and God as in the ancient phrase "tabernacle of the congregation," more correctly rendered "tent of meeting," descriptive of the spot where Jehovah met with his people. The word "prayer-meeting" conveys rather the thought of people meeting together for worship, not of people meeting with God.

The *personnel* of the prayer-meeting consists usually of Christians, most of whom are members of

the Church, together with scattering cases of those who are not followers of Christ. The service is ordinarily conducted by the pastor of the church, although it is not considered improper that the leader should be one of the other officers of the church, or even a private member.

The prayer-meeting is usually held once a week, and lasts from one hour to an hour and a half. Wednesday night is considered by many a favorable time, so that the prayer-meeting may come halfway between the Sundays, like a rock in mid-stream upon which a spent swimmer rests his hand and takes breath before completing the passage. Sometimes, however, Friday night is chosen for the prayer-meeting; and then it is quite customary to have some other public service on Tuesday evening, in order that the symmetry of hebdomadal worship may be preserved — Tuesdays and Fridays being regarded as the foci in an ellipse of which the two consecutive Sundays are the vertices.

The prayer-meeting is not as a rule held in the main auditory of the church. The people do not feel at home there. They lack what is called the elbow touch. Many Christians, like the Delphic girl, seem dependent upon poisoned air for their inspiration. The close, mephitic atmosphere of a small, ill-ventilated room is conducive to that feverishness without which the prayer-meeting seems cold and dull. The fitful and evanescent devotion of the prayer-meeting is hardly robust enough to endure the ample spaces and pure air of the main auditory. The week-night meeting is usually held in a

smaller room, called a chapel or vestry, which is too often a musty conventicle inaccessible to the public street — the last place in the world into which you can allure an unregenerate man. It has too much of a mouse-trap look. He is shy of being caught. He is afraid of coming into too close quarters with Christians, lest he should have to be converted in self-defense. It seems to me that if sometimes of a Sunday night, for instance, at the close of the preaching service, the minister and his fellow-Christians had the courage to gear themselves up for a prayer-meeting, immediately after the benediction, in the main auditory of the church — an ample opportunity, of course, being given for those to escape who wish to do so — many people might be reached who otherwise would never venture within the narrow, charmed circle of the prayer-meeting.

The exercises of the prayer-meeting consist of *Scripture reading* and a brief *address* by the leader; *prayers*, either by the leader or by other Christians, of their own volition, or as requested by the leader; *hymns* that are usually of a lighter and more cheerful character than those that are used on Sunday; and *testimonies* — that is, brief remarks in which the believers present confess their faith or describe their spiritual experience, or state and illustrate truths which they have learned from the Bible.

The distinctive feature of the prayer-meeting is its *social* character. On Sunday morning the church meets to hold a service which in its order and character is thoroughly premeditated, stately, massive, and ornate. The main object of it is the edification

of the saints. In the Sunday school the church meets for the study of the Bible. On Sunday evening the Church meets to hold a more popular service, through which it may attract and reach the outside world. At the prayer-meeting the church meets for a more social service, in which all may actively participate, whether private members or those holding official positions. In fact, this gathering of the church at the prayer-meeting seems to be as closely modelled as any of the rest of our services upon the primitive assembly of the Christians in apostolic times, as described, for instance, in I Cor., xiv. When they came together each one had a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation, and when they prophesied it was not an uncommon thing that one who had come in an unbeliever and unlearned to be convinced of sin and to fall down on his face and worship God, and declare that God was in them of a truth. Churches that never have prayer-meetings will avoid many difficulties. Their worship will never be marred by extravagance or vulgarity. It will be very proper, but it will be the propriety of the graveyard. It will be

“ Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.”

It will lack the spontaneity and inspiration which characterized the assemblies of the primitive saints. Such Christians will not have their feelings ruffled or be made indignant, like St. Paul, when a crazy, hysterical girl disturbed his meeting and brought contempt on his message by crying out, “ These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show

unto us the way of salvation." Neither will they have the power to say, as did he, "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her."

But the definition of a prayer-meeting is not complete without a statement of its purposes. One of its objects is the refreshment of Christians. Sundays seem too far apart. The soul's plumage, ruffled and torn by sin and care, needs oftener to be smoothed through worship. In the prayer-meeting the spirit finds a response to its eager sigh

"Calm me, my God, and keep me calm;
Let Thine outstretched wing
Be like the shade of Elim's palm,
Beside her desert spring."

Even when viewed from the worldly standpoint the prayer-meeting may be conducted in such a way as to have great recreative value. People in our great town like to go out somewhere at night. They resemble that French *émigré* who refused to marry the lady with whom he spent all his evenings, asking, with a shrug, "And where shall I go, then, to spend my evenings?" If they are ever so tired, it is better for working-people to have a change of scene rather than to drop down in their tracks. The prayer-meeting provides them with an innocent place to go to in the evening. They have probably been on their feet all day, and now they have comfortable chairs to sit down in. The service is short, so that, having secured the needed change in the current of their thoughts and feelings, they can retire early; while the theatres, in their endeavors to rest the people,

have not the sense to be brief, but trench upon our sleeping hours, so that we come jaded to our work on the following morning. The room for the prayer-meeting is full of music and light. There is an atmosphere of sympathy and sociability. The songs and prayers and addresses are brief, so as to secure a diverting variety of thought and feeling, and the mind is not wearied and strained as by a long sermon. The pastor should shake hands with all the people as they come in. His personality should not be fenced in by the platform, but should pervade the whole room. I believe the place of prayer may be made so attractive, even to children and young people, that their godly parents will have misgivings about allowing them to attend for fear they will get too much enjoyment out of their religion.

We are making a mistake in trying to attract the young with cheap and trashy music. There is too much musical culture in the air. There should be able leadership in the singing. The richest and best harmonies should be selected. Even the commonest people aspire toward the most classical music, and are only prevented from enjoying it by ministers and teachers who insist that what they want is dance-hall melody. A reaction has begun to set in. People are satiated with musical confectionery. Choose Barnby and Dykes instead. Have done, once for all, with the snuffling, droning cabinet organ and the rank, ear-splitting cornet. Substitute the spirited piano and the delicate human tones of the violin. Enliven the meeting with an occasional solo. I have found it worth while, during

the first part of the service, to rehearse some of the more unfamiliar hymns and chants that we are to have the following Sunday.

But the prayer-meeting is not for recreation alone; its aim is also instruction, especially of beginners in the faith. The young Christian is not only taught the truth, he learns to use it in public prayer and address. We do not really possess an idea except as we impart it to others. How many an able preacher learned to do his first thinking on his feet in the prayer-meeting, and timidity and hesitation often have in them the promise of future power. It is Cicero that writes to Cecilius: "I, I say, so help me heaven, when the day approaches on which I shall be called upon to defend a client, am not only disturbed in mind, but tremble in every limb." Every effort should be made to keep the prayer-meeting from falling into the hands of the same faithful few who speak and pray every time. The new convert should be encouraged to take an active part, beginning perhaps with a verse of Scripture and then proceeding to give some little thought suggested by it. It is very helpful to have definite requests for prayer presented early in the meeting, and then to call upon one and another young Christian to pray, provided, of course, that his permission has been gained beforehand.

In the prayer-meeting, moreover, there will be generally found those who have not begun the Christian life; or, if they are believers at all, have not joined the Church. Christians should be gifted with a kind of *adhesiveness*, so that they will not

come alone, but will bring unbelievers with them; and these are to be persuaded to accept Christ and to confess Him. Every prayer-meeting should be not only recreative and instructive but evangelistic. A minister sometimes thinks, "My mission is to edify the saints. There are enough Christians of the kind we have. Let us not make any more. Let us, rather, try to raise the character of the Christians in the churches, and this will of itself most effectually impress and convince the people who stand without." But is not the atmosphere that is favorable for the birth of a soul the very best atmosphere for that soul to grow in? Will not a tree thrive best in the environment that caused it to spring up? And is any exercise more conducive to the development of the Christian life than to engage in the work of the Master who came to save that which was lost?

There is truth, then, in the old saying that "the prayer-meeting is the very pulse of the Church;" and just so far as it fails to refresh and instruct saints and to convert sinners it is sure to decline. In a great town like ours the prayer-meeting has to struggle for its existence; and it is not strange that many think it has seen its best days and belongs to the old order "that changeth, yielding place to new."

The late dinner, where the family naturally linger about the cheerful board, makes the prayer-meeting seem a hardship to people of comfort and fashion; while, on the other hand, the workingman, having washed himself and eaten his evening meal, is tempted to fall asleep by his fire or to betake himself

to the saloon, where there is no definite hour of beginning or closing.

In our larger churches the very bigness of the assembly of worshippers tends to dissipate the homelike atmosphere. Very few are qualified to address a large number of people; their voices reach only the narrow circle of those who sit immediately about them, while over the rest of the people there broods a dull silence. For this reason the weekly prayer-meeting little by little changes its essential character. It has the inspiration of numbers indeed, but becomes more formal. The pastor, or some other person selected beforehand, delivers a kind of lecture, and after a prayer or two the service ends without the free commingling of thought and feeling that is the distinctive feature of the prayer-meeting. Sometimes a foreign missionary takes up the hour; again, a Sunday-school specialist or the agent of some benevolent society presents his views. And so, before the people are hardly aware of it, all the essential features of the prayer-meeting gradually disappear. Now, I am inclined to think that this process must necessarily go on in the large and growing churches. My way of meeting the difficulty is to appoint for some other than the regular night a service in which the old prayer-meeting ideas will be preserved. Have as a standing subject, for instance, "Echoes from Sunday," and cultivate anew the homelike feeling that has disappeared from the regular week-night service. The final outcome of this progress of evolution will be a meeting every night of the week, and each service will have its dis-

tinctive character. There will be a service for singers, a service especially for the Church, a service for young people, a service for Sunday-school workers and teachers, all culminating in a large general service. In this way the wants of all will be met, and the passer-by will find the church bright and open every evening. In our own church we seem best to meet the wants of the community by holding our church prayer-meeting on Friday night, our young people's meeting on Wednesday night, and, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights what we call a Gospel Meeting. What we must guard against is the multiplication of meetings beyond the real demand for them. The rule is to start no new meeting until the attendance at the services you already have suggests the need of an overflow. It has always seemed to me, too, that the regular week-night prayer-meeting of the church should take the precedence in a Christian's thought over all other meetings. It should have the right of way. The others are to be regarded as extras, to be attended if one wishes, but over and above all the church prayer-meeting. Otherwise, there is danger of a break in the organic unity; instead of one church you have practically a congeries of little churches. There is a tendency in our time for the young people to have a little church of their own at the expense of the general Church life.

Most ministers will agree that it is more difficult to have a good prayer-meeting than a good preaching service. One obstacle is the disinclination, even of the best people, to co-operate otherwise than in

congregational song. With many, this can never be overcome. Others may be persuaded beforehand to allow you to ask them to speak or to lead in prayer. The subject, too, should be opened in such a suggestive manner as to be easily discussed even by untrained minds. My own custom is to have in my mind a full sermon analysis, and after giving the first point, endeavor by skilful questions to draw the others out of the people. The opening address should not be too condensed and finished. There should be left rough edges for the people to take hold of. The blackboard can be very effectively used in the prayer-meeting.

Long remarks, either by the leader or others, are fatal to the interest and power of the prayer-meeting. A minister who was apt to occupy more than his share of the time in the prayer-meeting and then wonder why the members of the church did not take part, chanced to be speaking one evening on the healing of the ten lepers, and of the one who returned to give glory to Christ, and why the nine did not do so too; to which one of the deacons replied that he thought "it was quite likely the first one took up all the time." Almost every church has its prayer-meeting killers. We should try gentle private persuasion before open rebuke, and, above all things, never betray irritation in public. A ministerial friend of mine was once settled near a theological seminary, the professors of which were in the habit of attending his meetings and of consuming more than their share of the time. On one occasion a professor had used up about twenty min-

utes in his address. When he finished, my friend, in his despair, was about to close the meeting with the benediction, when a little boy who had been converted a short time before arose and said, "I am thankful to say that I am *still trusting the Savior*."

II. *The Young People's Prayer-Meeting.*

The church meets on Friday evening as we have seen for social worship, older people preponderating (in other words, the Prayer-meeting); and it meets again on Wednesday evening for social worship, the young people preponderating (in other words, the Young People's meeting). The young people's meeting is usually held under the auspices of the Young People's Society for Christian Endeavor or one of the kindred organizations, the Epworth League and the Baptist Young People's Union. The Young People's Society for Christian Endeavor is a vast social fact. It has come to stay. It is an organization consisting of local societies distributed throughout the community, one in a church. Its *personnel* consists of young people. Its aims are aggressively religious, its motto being *For Christ and the Church*.

It is rather late in the day to discuss the advantages and drawbacks of societies within the local church. Such societies exist, and they will remain. We have the Sunday school, the Sewing Circle, the Women's Missionary Society and so on; and in almost all our churches the young people, whether regularly organized or not, have a prayer-meeting of their own, and are pervaded by a strong and definite consciousness of solidarity.

The young people's societies of Christian endeavor are the organic expression of this instinct. Their founder, the Rev. Dr. F. E. Clark, has succeeded in formulating and crystallizing a general tendency. Almost every church had its young people's meeting before the Society for Christian Endeavor had ever been heard of. Dr. Clark with consummate generalship geared these forces into a simple and workable form. The origination of good tendencies, or the reversal of foolish or vicious trends is always a slow and laborious process, but to transmute into social organisms tendencies already existent is swift and magical. It is like lighting a fuse. This is the secret of the marvellously rapid growth of the Christian Endeavor movement.

One may deplore the need of such wheels within the wheel of the local church; but for all that such a need exists. A society organized in some such way does succeed in getting an amount of work out of the young people which even the pastor's faithful preaching fails to elicit. There is an immense supply of latent force in each church which this society makes available. There are many young men in our churches who, like Saul of old, are hidden among the stuff, and if you can only once get them straightened out, they will tower head and shoulders above their fellows. The Christian Endeavor Society helps to bring such characters to the fore.

The forces in our larger churches need to be mobilized and deployed. The members are too huddled. A church always has a fierce growth at the

outset, and when it reaches a membership of three or four hundred, it becomes top-heavy. Like an old-fashioned tallow dip, the longer it burns, the dimmer is its flame. We are like boys who are trying to make a huge ball out of the moist snow. At first the round mass moves easily and rapidly over the ground, gathering new weight at every turn. But as it grows large, it is more difficult to handle, it moves more slowly and toilsomely, until at last it will not budge another inch. Our larger churches exert an influence in the community in no wise commensurate with their numerical strength. Hence the need within the church itself of smaller societies, which shall specialize and distribute the work that ought to be done, and so utilize the energies of many of our members who are now standing idle.

While all this may be said in favor of societies on the plan of Christian Endeavor, there are also dangers to be vigilantly guarded against. The young people's society should not little by little displace in our consciousness the church. It should be rigorously subsidiary to the church. Its claims should always be second to those of the church. It is said that the founder of the Christian Endeavor Society felt the need of it during a revival, as a sort of half-way house between conversion and church membership. But the tendency is that the people remain at the half-way house, just as people will satisfy their consciences with belonging to the Sunday school, or the congregation, instead of joining the church. You may be sure that if human nature can find any way to Heaven other than through the church it will

take that road every time. And how much greater the danger becomes if the church members come to regard the young people's society as a little church within the church, and make its claims paramount.

Many minds are so small and inelastic that they cannot give room to more than one social concept at a time. In such cases the young people's society becomes virtually the church. There are so many people about, who, instead of taking the regular train, like to run a little engine of their own. An old Scotch professor of Hebrew, while a pleasant companion at the social gatherings in the university town, used to be very quiet and uncommunicative at home. His witty wife complained, "He hangs his fiddle up at his ain door when he comes in, for we never hear a scrape o' it." And so we have Christians who are full of animation and enthusiasm in the Young Men's Christian Association, or the Society for Christian Endeavor, but when it comes to the prayer-meeting or the regular routine duties of their own church, they are limp and nerveless, silent and critical; you never hear a scrape of their fiddle.

Other objections may occur to the mind. The motives animating the young people's meeting are not always purely religious. The enthusiasm is sometimes traceable to the social instinct which is naturally strongest at the pairing season of life. Love of power and leadership may sometimes enter in as a motive force. Some object to the pledge; and certainly it is better not to take it at all than to take it and not keep it. The *club* spirit sometimes prevails. Your society becomes a little coterie.

There may be an exclusive atmosphere; so that if you try to use the society as a missionary force with which to reach the lowest classes of people, you will meet with remonstrance. As far as my own observation goes, the local society, if left to itself is not effectively evangelistic. The young Christians have a good and profitable time, but very few unbelievers are converted and brought into the Church through the instrumentality of the society. We are sometimes reminded of a child on a rocking horse, about which Rowland Hill remarked: "How wondrously like some Christians! there is motion but no progress." Christian Endeavor statistics show that thousands of associate members join the church. But there is a delicious fallacy in all that. The question is whether these conversions are due to the efforts of the society rather than to the preaching services, the Sunday school and all the other church agencies and instrumentalities which are brought to bear upon these same people. The fact that we are alive and in evidence at the time when certain events take place does not necessarily prove that we brought them about. Complaint is made that the annual conventions are too large, and are promotive of bumptiousness; but I for one am gratefully susceptible to the enthusiasm of vast assemblies. They have great inspirational value. They are a magnificent testimony of the unity of Christendom. The showings in many of our churches are so feeble that it is good strategy for us once in a while to mass our forces

and make upon the outside world the impression of overwhelming numbers.

In fact it is easy to find fault with anything good. According to Emerson it is harder to write a poor poem than the finest criticism on it. The Society is a mighty engine for good. A pastor cannot make a greater mistake than to fall out of sympathy with his young people. I have always found that they respond quickly and gratefully to the pastor's guiding touch. The society is not a social expression of some new-spun theory. It was produced by a busy pastor to meet an exigency in the life of his own church. Only the most suspicious nature can view it as a menace to church or minister. The constitution itself gives the pastor the controlling voice in its councils. It is his own fault if he does not make good use of this burnished weapon which Providence has placed in his hand. The solution of every enigma will be found, I think, in the conception that the young people's society, as well as the Sunday school, is at bottom the Church itself, geared for a specific purpose. The young people's meeting is the Church itself met for social worship, the young people preponderating; as the church meets on another evening of the week for social worship, the older people preponderating. To emphasize this idea the pastor of the church, the president of the society, and the leader of the meeting should sit, all three together, on the platform during the service, each performing his distinctive function, the pastor opening the worship, the leader making the address, and the president conducting the business meeting at the close.

III. *Gospel Meetings.*

The church, as we have seen, meets on Friday evening for social worship, the older people preponderating, and on Wednesday evening for social worship, the young people preponderating. This leaves us Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings for what we call Gospel Meetings. In this way we have nightly worship the year around. The Gospel Meeting begins with a *sidewalk meeting*. We open the church door at half-past seven, and, just outside we sing a few popular gospel hymns, generally accompanied by a cornet. This service lasts till eight. By this means we gather about the doorway a company of two or three hundred men, women and children. They help us on the choruses in the out-door meeting. At the close of this meeting we adjourn inside and heartily invite all to come in "*just as they are.*" In this way we easily fill our room every night. People will enter a church door in a throng who would never have the hardihood to make such a venture in cold blood and alone.

We then have an informal gospel meeting inside, having the door open during the singing and closed during prayer, reading and remarks. Such a meeting seems to go itself. You need a leader, a pianist, an usher and two warm-hearted able-bodied men just outside the door to invite the passers-by to come in. We usually have a short prayer, a few words of Scripture, and addresses of five or ten minutes by the leader, and brief testimonies, interspersed with plenty of cheerful singing. This meeting we have

found especially effective in summer. A good many are converted, and those unused to church find their way into the place of prayer. Helpers will come to you from other churches where there is no daily service, for every church has some restless spirits that want to go to meeting somewhere every night. And these Gospel Meetings we find the best opportunities of reaching with the gospel the fallen and the intemperate.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH AND THE POOR.

I. *Duty.*

The churches distributed through a community form the most perfect philanthropic machine which the human mind can possibly conceive of, for cleaning up the poverty and despair of mankind, if only each church felt responsibility for the misery that presses against her from every side, and would patiently and thoughtfully bend over the problem of befriending and helping, in the wisest possible way, the lost and fallen and perishing in her immediate entourage — old people, little children, the unemployed, the sick, all who suffer. She can do much herself directly, and more still, by delicate and sympathetic mediation between the poor and the vast organized charities that exist for their relief. Even the old Judaism was animated by a philanthropic spirit. How beautiful and pathetic the ancient rule:

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God.

Christ reproduced the old lesson with fresh beauty and impressiveness in the parable of the Good Samaritan. He teaches the grace of neighborliness. Love and pity constitute eternal life. To love is to live. The same law of love He states in simplest, unforgettable phrase: *Give to him that asketh of thee.* Not that we should interpret His saying in an indolent and literal way. It is not a rule, He gives us, but a principle. He does not mean that we should pass by the shy and silent sufferers that do not ask, or that we should violate the spirit of His own Golden Rule by giving people what they ask for, without regard to their real welfare. He would not have us give alms to the clamorous impostor, or rum to the drunkard, or the gleaming razor to an infant, or the rope to a suicide. Infidels like to crowd us into the absurdities of intense literalism. Christ simply states in concrete form, the law of love. Were He in the flesh on earth to-day, I cannot but believe that He would be a friend to wise and discriminate charity.

The early church followed in the steps of her Master in ministering to the poor. During the persecution of the Christians in the third century, under the Emperor Valerian, the rapacious Roman Prefect demanded of the young arch-deacon, Laurentius, to

be shown the treasures of the church. "These are our treasures," replied the arch-deacon, pointing to a great multitude of widows, orphans, blind, lame and sick, who were under the care of the church. The answer cost him his life. He was slowly roasted alive in an iron chair.

The churches of our own day are not only under obligation to provide commodious places where people may assemble to hear the Gospel. It is their duty to imitate the Master who went about doing good. Our main work, I concede, is in the realm of motive and character, rather than of environment. The objective point should always be the relief of spiritual need. Chalmers has truly said that character is the parent of comfort. Unless there be a substratum of character, the relief you extend is of little avail. You are building a roadbed through a bottomless swamp. "Why does your father go around begging, instead of working?" said an old gentleman to a little boy. "He begs so he can get money to buy whiskey," was the reply. "But why does he drink whiskey?" "Oh," said the little boy, "so he can get up courage to go around and beg." This is a vicious circle, indeed, but it is the history of many a life. Without a change of character there can be no permanent amelioration of circumstance. All evil has a moral root; and with this religion has to do.

But a man will not listen to the good news when he is in pain. To believe in God, he must first learn to believe in man. *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen.* "It is one of the secrets," profoundly writes

George Eliot, "in that change of mental poise which has been fitly named Conversion, that to many among us, neither heaven nor earth has any revelation, till some personality touches theirs with a peculiar influence, subduing them into receptiveness." Kindness subdues the heart into receptiveness for the Gospel. A creature in pain is slow to perceive the Fatherhood of God. An atmosphere of practical friendliness in church disposes the sad to look for comfort to Christ. An eminent Socialist writes: "I lay awake and pondered. I pondered over this — what lever was there, by which we could move the working classes. I found it at last, and, when I beheld it, a shudder ran over me. For the name of that lever is *Despair*." If in the midst of the misery that pervades the slums of our great town, the church proves to be a comforting force, the sad averted gaze of the workingman will turn instinctively towards the cross. The task is a difficult one. The insoluble problems of the day are *social* rather than *theological*. We seem held in the grip of great industrial laws that crush us at their will. You cannot start a kindling-wood business to employ your poor, without killing out around you little dealers, whose financial well-being is as precarious as that of the apple-woman, who took in a bad dollar, and thereby broke up her business. You cannot employ a poor starving man to do a little painting or carpentry for you without collision with the workingmen's unions. Every tide of good has its undertow of evil. At last we are ready to say: "Let me do a little good, make something

happy, when and while I can; our poor short lives cannot pretend to compete with the huge infinitude of evil.”

II. *General Spirit.*

The Good Samaritan is the model philanthropist. That parable is humanity's best classic, as regards doing good.

1. Christian Philanthropy is *observant*. It is quick to see the unquiet look, the quivering lip, the cheek whitened with pain or fear. It does not steal past suffering on tiptoe. It stops to ask the sympathetic question; as Joseph, himself schooled in sorrow, observed the haggard faces of his fellow-prisoners, after their night of troubled dreams, and said: Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? Sympathy is not quick to shift the burden of service to others' shoulders.

2. But to observe and report is not enough. Some have the journalistic instinct and can describe the miseries of the poor in lurid colors; but one must be constructive and remedial. The Good Samaritan was *prompt* in administering relief. With his extemporized surgical bandages he quickly stanching the blood that was flowing rapidly away — a fine lesson in *First Aid to the Injured*.

3. He was *practical*. He did not stop to spin out some theory for the abolition of poverty and pain by legislative sleight-of-hand. Some people seem to feel that if they praise a virtue they possess it, and if they condemn a vice, they are without it; and if they write an article in favor of endowing churches,

that they have endowed a half a dozen. The Rev. Samuel A. Barnett, who has worked many years among the poor of London, said: "If to-morrow every one who cares for the poor would become the friend of one poor person,—forsaking all others,—there would be no insoluble problem of the unemployed, and London would be within a measureable distance of being a city of happy homes."

"In Life's small things be resolute and great,
To keep thy muscle trained. Knowest thou when Fate
Thy measure takes; or when She'll say to thee,
I find thee worthy; do this deed for me?"

4. The true philanthropist is *personal* in his kindness. He is not content to do good by proxy, or to organize some social machinery for the cure of ill. "When I was in the bondage of sin," wrote St. Francis of Assisi, "it was bitter to me and loathsome to *see and look* upon persons infected with leprosy; but that blessed Lord brought me among them, and I did mercy with them, and, I departing from them, what before seemed bitter and loathsome was turned and changed to me into great sweetness and comfort, both of body and soul."

5. The Good Samaritan was *persistent*. Count how often the conjunction *and* occurs in the parable. It may be called the *Parable of the Holy And*. When you once begin to do good, there is no getting through with it. Once involved, you are led from step to step of sacrifice. Human nature is so unreasonable, that if you give a man a good meal, it is just like him to go off and get hungry again. There is no end to doing good. Countless difficulties beset

your path. Once be reputed a philanthropist, and you will find unworthy applicants thronging upon you from every side. They give you no time to search out silent and more poignant suffering. And then you are in danger of impairing a man's self-respect when you help him. He at once lies down on you full length, and is only angry with you when your resources are exhausted. Your very kindness prevents his learning the lesson of self-dependence, which is so clearly set forth in the lines of Heine:

“ They gave me advice and counsel in store,
Praised me and honored me more and more;
Said that I only should wait awhile,
Offered their patronage, too, with a smile.”

“ But with all their honor and approbation,
I should, long ago, have died of starvation,
Had there not come an excellent man,
Who bravely to help me along began.”

“ Good fellow! — he got me the food I ate,
His kindness and care I shall never forget;
Yet I cannot embrace him — though other folks can,
For I myself am this excellent man.”

There are few indeed that can be helped, except at the cost of their own manliness, and fewer still that are capable of gratitude. It was said of one of the Presidents of the United States: “ There were times when twenty men applied for the same office, and after he had reached a selection, he found that he had made nineteen enemies and one ingrate.” In fact so hard is it to find a person both poor and indubitably worthy, that we count such a case a veritable bonanza. You might as well expect lightning to

strike twice in the same spot. People will come to church just for what they can get, and, coming with this motive, will fail to appropriate spiritual good. Comparatively few churches as yet being engaged in systematic charity, the poor will stream in upon you from other churches around you. Your friends, perceiving your philanthropic disposition, will help you by unloading on you their poor relations; so that, by and by, you become like a sinking life-boat into which despairing passengers continue to throw themselves long after it is crowded full. Noisy and clamorous impostors press in between you and the shy, unobtrusive sufferers whom you would fain reach; just as when an English naturalist undertook to feed birds in his garden during the famine of winter, he observed that when he threw the food down, the obstreperous sparrows were at once in the middle of it, and not eating, as other birds do, with a peck and a start, but gobbling, *wolfing*; while the blackbird and thrush and chaffinch came timidly forward, only to find that every crumb had been swallowed. Many of the choicer birds die simply from timidity. Indeed so many difficulties haunt the steps of him who goes about doing good that nothing but the constraining love of Christ will prove an adequate motive. Philanthropic work seems often only a series of disillusion. There are many who are ready to launch benevolent enterprises; very few who may be depended upon to maintain them. Beginning is poetry; continuance is prose. Then one is pressed down with the sense of the overwhelming mass of wretchedness,

“The fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities.”

The most strenuous benevolence seems like a drop of sweetness in a bitter ocean. We seem to hear Satan's sneer whispered into the ear of Faust, who is torn with anguish over the ruined Margaret: *Die ist die erste nicht*. The chill mist of despair rises and gathers round the heart, and we are ready to cry out; *Who will show us any good*. The only cure for this is quiet persistence in doing the small definite task of consolation that offers itself, leaving all thought of result to God.

6. Again, the Good Samaritan is *thrifty and business-like* in his beneficence. He counts out two pence — two days wages — and reckons that this will meet the requirements of the case. He does not in a gush of compassion overdo the matter, emptying his purse and leaving nothing for other needy cases. There is a kind of New England flavor about the Good Samaritan. One feels sure that he would not let himself be imposed upon, but that he would do good in the most intelligent and scientific way. Were he living now, I doubt not that he would be a friend and contributor to the Charity Organization.

7. And finally, he was *disinterested*. He could expect nothing in return. The Jew would forever be ashamed to own that he had been helped by a Samaritan. We must do good for sweet charity's own sake. While in the end wholesale, persistent and systematic kindness will conciliate a community and soften hearts for the reception of the truth, you

will not find that the individuals you relieve will, in many cases, come to your church. They do not like to revisit the scenes of their shame and suffering. They will make themselves scarce in your neighborhood. Do not befriend the poor just to draw them into your church. Are you kind to a horse, because you expect him to join your church? Do good for its own dear sake. A business man who advertises his goods on a large scale, does not make himself miserable by inquiring too curiously into the definite visible results achieved through any single advertisement.

III. *Practical Methods.*

Having considered the *duty* of Christian philanthropy, and its *general character*, let us glance at some *practical methods* of doing good. These will vary with the needs of different fields. One should be careful not to try to cover ground that is already as well or better covered by somebody else. You will see people, at great expense opening a library in a part of the city where there are already plenty of libraries clamoring for people to come and read the books. A church will see another church near by maintaining a successful *kindergarten* or *class in gymnastics for women*, and it will proceed at once to try to do likewise; not thinking that it will hurt the other church and probably fail itself, because it is proposing to meet a want that is already met. The better way is to ask oneself the question: What physical, mental, or social needs are there in this community that no one else is trying intelligently to satisfy?

Is there any good side of life that is falling into neglect? Here lies your opportunity. People discover, to their surprise, that the church is their friend, and cares for their comfort and well being.

(1.) With us there are certain kinds of systematic relief that are in operation *all the year through*.

(a.) *The Dispensary*. It is open daily at half-past twelve. We have seven physicians. Male and female doctors come on alternate days. The physicians treat the patients free of charge. We have no rent to pay, as the rooms of the dispensary are in our church building. We buy our drugs at wholesale, and the medicines are compounded in the dispensary. Patients are charged ten cents a prescription, if they are able to pay. During the last twelve months we had 7,125 visits, and 2,952 new patients.

(b.) *Employment Bureau*. Every day at two o'clock we meet the poor at the church, and there is a lady who gives her attention to securing situations for those who are out of work.

(c.) *Penny Provident Fund*. Children are encouraged to lay up small sums of money, and thus habits of thrift are formed.

2. We have a system also of *Winter Relief*.

The sufferings of the poor are greatest during the extreme heat of summer and during the winter months. The discomfort of the former they to a greater or less extent mitigate by staying in the streets or on the house-tops the best part of the night. But the biting cold of winter often places them in a position from which they cannot extricate themselves unaided. It is during the coldest months of

the year that there is the least work to be found, the season of all others when the cost of living is greatest.

In view of these facts, the Church aims to aid the worthy poor especially at these times. In the summer, through our Fresh-Air Charities, and in the winter, through various kinds of work.

(a.) The Church, being kept open almost constantly from eight in the morning until ten at night, situated as it is on a busy thoroughfare, needs to be frequently swept, dusted, scrubbed, and cleaned. This forms an *immediate* source of work for the applicants for relief. One cold day last winter eighteen persons, several of whom represented families, were so employed. We reserve the right to pay in *meals, lodgings, groceries, fuel, shoes, or clothing* rather than in *money*. Should the applicant be too ill or weak to work, medical treatment is given in the *dispensary*, and food and lodgings are temporarily supplied. At the same time we make every effort to get the man or woman permanent work. A man can earn in a few hours enough to keep his family for one day, and so has the rest of the day in which to look for work, for a man can get work for himself better than any one can get work for him.

(b.) The Mothers' Meeting is a source of great help and encouragement to many poor mothers. They come to the Church once a week for three hours to sew, and each is credited for her work with thirty cents, receiving the value of the money in *groceries* at wholesale prices, or in the *clothing* made at the meeting. The women are more or less free to choose

the garments they make, and it is pathetic to observe the eagerness with which some of them ask for sheets and pillowslips. As a mother represents a whole family, we have found that the Mothers' Meeting has tided over many people at the hardest time in the year.

(c.) Many women cannot leave their little ones in order to work away from home. In such cases we give or try to secure sewing or mending for them to do at home.

(d.) Over a hundred and twenty-five little girls come to our Sewing School on Saturday mornings, and while, of course, the teachers perform this ministry as a labor of love, yet the materials out of which these poor children learn to make their own garments have to be provided at considerable cost. I am sure your heart would ache, as mine has, if you could be present at our Sewing School on some cold morning, and see how thinly clad are these daughters of the poor — how ill-prepared to face the bitter cold of winter. We have introduced the Pratt Institute system of sewing, the children beginning with the simplest stitches and gradually achieving the more elaborate needlework.

(e.) There are many who apply for relief who have never done laborious work, who have, perhaps, not the strength to do it. These we attempt to help in other ways more suited to their needs and abilities, such as folding tracts and circulars, addressing envelopes, teaching a class in the Sewing School, singing in our chorus choir, etc. So that they may make some return, however inadequate, for the aid given.

(f.) By means of classes in Stenography, in Singing, in Gymnastics, and in scientific Sewing, we endeavor to teach the poor to do a higher and more lucrative kind of work. It is astonishing how much of this institutional work a church can accomplish with even a small expenditure of money, provided the work is wisely directed. She lends her guiding and inspiring influence, gives the use of her light, airy rooms, and teaches the people how to co-operate. The best of instructors and appliances can be secured, and a large part of the expense is met by small nightly fees, which even the poor, if they are intelligent and enterprising, are able and willing to pay.

(g.) You will see that the work is guided by certain *principles*:

Every encouragement to *co-operate* is afforded to the poor.

An equivalent in work is required, as far as possible, for all help rendered.

Relief is given, as far as can be, in food, or clothing, or fuel, and other necessities of life, instead of in money.

We try to know in their homes the people whom we help, and apply our relief mainly to women and children, and men with families, rather than to broken-down and vagrant men who have only themselves to provide for, and whom we often aid by means of the wood-yard of the Charity Organization.

We endeavor to bring those that suffer within reach of the different forms of organized charity which we have here in New York. The Church can

perform in this way the important office of mediator. Millions of dollars are invested in organized charity, but often the individual sufferer does not know of the relief which was intended for his case, and coming to us, is put in the way of availing himself of that relief.

It is a peculiarity of this part of the city that it contains so many respectable people who were once well-to-do, but have gradually sunk, in spite of every struggle, into poverty, and are hidden away in furnished rooms, for which they pay usually an exorbitant rent. Such misery is none the less poignant because it is silent and unobtrusive — making no outcry, but revealing itself only to the touch of thoughtful and discriminating kindness and sympathy. You would, I am sure, be touched by the many cases of which I could tell you where people have been helped by us in some heart-rending crisis, and have afterward recovered themselves and found employment, and in some instances have paid back the money we had given them.

3. The work of *Summer Relief* has peculiar interest and fascination —

(a.) *Fresh Air for Children.* To the great bulk of the population of our city the thought of summer brings no pleasing outlook. Their cramped and ill-ventilated quarters, swarming with restless and suffering children, make the burdens of poor mothers almost unbearable. They hail with delight any proposition to send the children into the country for two weeks or more. "It'll be such a relief to have 'em all gone to onst!" a tired mother said last sum-

mer. "Oh, I wish I could stay in the country all summer! I hate horrid old New York," said a child who was returning from a two weeks' vacation. "The janitor says, 'Keep out of the yard!' and, 'Get off the steps!' and there's nothing to do but run in the hot old streets." The heat of last summer brought out a skin affection, which was slightly contagious, and prevented the going away of many poor children. One little boy from a family afflicted with this trouble came to the church one day, and holding out his hands for inspection, said to the woman in charge of the summer work: "Please, can't I go? I ain't got no 'spots.'" He went mournfully home when his request was refused, and said to his mother, "I *can't* go to school again until I have seen the country." Unfortunately, all of his brothers were not entirely well until school had commenced, and he missed his vacation in the country.

For such children and for the mothers with little ones there are excursions to Coney Island or Rockaway for the day. Many a sick baby has been brought into the dispensary, apparently almost dead, but two or three "ocean trips," together with the proper nourishment and medicines, have worked wonders, and the children have recovered, to the surprise of every one. Some children look forward to their country trip as the time when they will get three full meals in one day — a very rare experience in their lives.

(b.) *Fresh Air for the Aged Sick and Disabled.* Mrs. George E. Crowell, of Battleboro, has for several years put at our disposal a beautiful cottage. It

is situated in a park of thirty acres, overlooking the Connecticut river, and environed by the Green Mountains. Here we keep for the summer the children in our little Church Home for Children; and in addition, for periods varying according to their needs, aged women, the convalescent from our dispensary, as well as overworked shop-girls.

(c.) *Cool Water.* Around our *cold-water fountain* on very hot days stands a crowd that frequently so blocks the corner that passers-by are compelled to step into the street. French, Italian, Irish, Americans, and negroes touch shoulder. Some drink from the tin cups which hang by the basin, but many come with pitchers and pails to carry the sparkling water home for dinner or supper. One little colored girl came almost every day last summer over ten blocks to carry a pailful home for dinner. "Give me your pail while I go and get some beer," a workman was heard to say to his companion. "No: go to the corner and get some water; it's colder," the other replied. The poor cannot afford to buy ice; and even when it is given to them in case of sickness, the only receptacle they have for it is a dish-pan. There is in the basement of the Church a box large enough to hold two tons of ice. The ice rests upon a coil of pipe several hundred feet long, through which flows *filtered* Croton water. Only once last summer did the ice entirely melt before morning. During the torrid heat of last August groups of men and women were seen around the fountain until after midnight. One woman, who lived with her husband in a furnished room eight feet by nine, said that the

only way they could get to sleep was to take home some of the ice-water, and dipping cloths in it, bind the cool compresses on their foreheads. During six months the fountain supplies the passers-by with cool water ranging in temperature from 40° to 48° Fahr.—*cool enough to be pleasant to the taste, and yet not so cold as to be injurious to the health.* No one who sees the thirsty crowds who are refreshed by it can doubt that the fountain is a great benefit to our densely-populated neighborhood.

(d.) *Flower Mission.* We have also a Flower Mission in connection with our summer work. Hardly a day passed last summer that one or more boxes of flowers were not received from suburban towns. These were distributed among the sick in the dispensary, those confined to their beds in tenements, and in the hospital wards. The workers who carried the flowers into the streets were frequently almost mobbed, and were chased for blocks by crowds of children crying, "Please give me a flower!" "Oh, missus, give me a flower!" One day one held open her box, showing only broken flowers and rose petals left. "Won't you give me the leaves, teacher?" "What will you do with them?" she asked. "I put 'em in a book, and they come out *faces* sometimes, and they smell sweet," the child answered, as she put her face down to the handful of fragrant rose leaves. "Them yellow flowers don't smell sweet, but they're like sunshine. They kinder make your heart glad," said an old woman who received a bunch of yellow daisies.

These are some of the ways in which the Institu-

tional Church may work among the poor. Other forms of philanthropy are described in the chapters on *the Institutional Church and Children*, and *the Institutional Church and Young Men*.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH AND CHILDREN.

The key to the solution of the hard problem of city evangelization lies in the puny hand of the little child. Who has not stood aghast and felt in despair as he has stopped in one of our thoroughfares and watched the great tide of foreigners streaming ashore from some emigrant-ship — alien men, women and children, chattering in a strange language, and bearing uncouth burdens on their heads and shoulders! They have come to stay. In solid phalanx they take possession of wide stretches of our city. They form an impregnable mass of humanity swayed by un-American and un-evangelical ideas and habits, at the mercy either of sacramentarianism or materialism. Those that are Christians have old-world notions of an organic relation between Church and State. Their views and practices regarding the Sabbath and temperance as well as other social questions are antagonistic to ours. Our churches retreat before this inflowing tide, seeking a congenial environment in the more remote and favored portions of our island. If our purpose is to build up our church, this is of course the right course to take.

But if our aim is to change the character of our community, then we should bring to bear upon these dense masses our best Gospel appliances. And our most effective measures will be preventive and educational; our most enduring work will be among the children. Alternative processes will in the nature of the case be slow and prosaic, but they will be sure.

The foreigners that come among us are very prolific. The children far outnumber the parents. The law limits the number of parents to two, but there is no law fixing the number of children. Again the children, in the natural order of events, will live longer than the parents, since they are younger. So that this foreign child-life extends farther in time as well as in space. The old birds will soon drop off the perch, but the young brood will live on and on. And then the children are accessible, while the parents are not. They want to learn our language, and are allured by the life and enjoy the music in our churches and Sunday Schools. Besides, the children are malleable, while the parents are inflexible. If the character of a community is to be changed at all it must be through the children.

I. *The Sunday School.*

The *Sunday School*, which has already been treated of in Chapter IV, is perhaps the strongest weapon used by the Church in city evangelization. The children are often drawn from families which the Gospel can touch in no other way. Then if the Sunday School is pervaded by an evangelistic spirit, and is not merely a class in sacred geography where

the children are taught the distance from Jerusalem to Jericho, but if Christ is presented to their young minds as a personal Saviour, many of them will be sure to accept Him. Then they will want to join your church. In many cases the parents will interpose no objections. Then the children will come into the church; and I have found these little foreign children my best members. They love to attend all the services. They sit in front. They join heartily in the singing. In other cases the parents may forbid their children to join your church. Even then you have started a current of new spiritual life that flows back into the bosom of the old state churches; and in either event the character of the community is radically changed for the better.

There was once in Broome street a flourishing Baptist church. It began to decline through the invasion of its field by foreigners, and the removal of its members to the upper part of the city. It left its down town field and took up a new position at the corner of Park avenue and Thirty-ninth street, and later still moved to Seventy-ninth street and the Boulevard. Its old house of worship in Broome street is now occupied by a Lutheran church, which has a Sunday School of a thousand members, and a Day School with fifteen hundred scholars. Now I submit that the Baptist church would have accomplished more for the moral and religious improvement of our city, had it been possible for it, instead of going up town, to hold its own in its old down town field and adapt its gearing to its new and

adverse conditions, engaging especially in work among children.

II. *The Kindergarten.*

But the *Sunday School* alone is inadequate. The sessions are too short and too far apart. Currents of sin and worldliness sweep between the Sundays and wash away holy impressions. What headway would we make in teaching arithmetic or geography, if the lesson came once a week, and occupied half an hour, and was taught by such incompetent, untrained, and unpaid teachers as are to be found in our Sunday Schools! Is it strange that our youth are growing up in ignorance of our sacred books? The study of the Bible is necessarily ruled out of our public schools. Family prayer is becoming obsolete even in Christian homes, and where it exists, it is often conducted in a desultory and humdrum manner. If we would redeem the children, the church must have her day-schools. Let her have a *kindergarten*, which will embrace children from three to seven. These are too young to be admitted into the public schools, and here is a providential opportunity which the church has of gathering them into her fold day by day. Let her employ a devout and trained kindergartner, who, shall not only educate the child's mind and body with the charming symbolic exercises of the kindergarten, but will also tell each day a little of the story of the life of Christ, and also teach the child Christian prayers and hymns. Let the kindergarten be supplemented upward by a *primary school*, embracing

children from seven to nine, and downward by a *day nursery and creche*, including children from birth to three.

The church will then have a complete educational system, meeting the wants of childhood from infancy to the age of nine. This is the period when the mind most easily takes religious impressions, and these impressions endure; as you can see in one of our museums a bronze arrow-head that bears the impress of a human finger. I do not mean to depreciate the public school, and the church should never ask for funds from the State with which to maintain her educational ventures. And she cannot look to the State to instruct her children in religion. It is not right for us to foist our religious views upon an educational system that depends for its support upon people of every faith, and of no faith at all. There is nothing in the essential nature of the public school itself to improve the individual in his moral and religious being. The public school will take its moral and religious color from the prevailing character of the community in which it swims. It is left for the church to educate her own children during those tender years, when, if ever, we become religious beings.

It seems strange that men should insist upon Christian Universities and Colleges and Academies, and be quite content to commit our children, at the distinctively religious age, to secular schools. No, our youth become infidel long before they enter the Academy or College. The early plastic years of infancy and childhood are requisite to the

making of saint, as well as of artist. It is safe at any rate for the mission church to try such educational experiments. For, in the public school, the smallest children are very much crowded. The danger is of a wholesale and mechanical system of teaching, that will not gently and penetratingly search out individual needs. Here is the opportunity of the church. Let her fold the neglected little ones to her bosom on weekdays as well as on Sundays. She will at least do no harm. Even young doctors are allowed to gain their experience by treating the poor; for, strange as it may seem, the physiological interior of the rich is the same as that of the poor, and, by experimenting upon those whom no one cares anything about, you can learn to cure people of high degree. Education is such a blessed good thing, that you cannot have too much of it in any community. Let the State educate; let the church educate; let private individuals educate; and even then, do not fear, there will be left many dark corners in society — unilluminated by the lamp of culture.

Besides the *Kindergarten*, *Day nursery*, and *Primary school*, the Institutional Church may feel the need in her educational plant of a *Sewing School for Girls* on Saturday, a *Junior Choir for Boys and Girls*, a *Class in Gymnastics for Girls*, and a *Class in Gymnastics for Boys*, (which we have found simpler and less expensive and more attractive than the Boys' Brigade). In this way she will keep her arm around a large number of different children, and the feet of childhood will wear smooth the paths that converge to the church door. Children are very sensitive to

social atmospheres. They are like the martlets that frequented the castle of Macbeth.

“ Where they
Most breed and haunt, I have observed, the air
Is delicate.”

III. *Children's Meetings.*

At our Gospel Meetings on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings, the children come in a large throng, attracted by the out-door singing. They are a disturbing element in the indoor meeting, the exercises not being suited to their immature intelligence. And so we have learned to take them into a room by themselves, and to occupy them with singing, prayer, Scripture reading, and a blackboard or object lesson. From this meeting they can the more easily be drawn into the Sunday School.

IV. *The Children's Home.*

Besides the various forms of work for children which have been described, there is still another field open to the church, with inspiring possibilities of rescue and usefulness. It would be quite practicable for many churches to take entire charge of small groups of needy children. A portion of our building, equal in size to a spacious three-story house, is manently cared for. And under the same roof they have shelter, bed, clothes, food, school, and church. The conditions of entrance are much more elastic than they can be made in large institutions. Beyond devoted to this use. Here twenty children are per-the single requirement that only children between

the ages of three and ten shall be received, there are, in fact, no conditions of entrance laid down. We are thus enabled to provide for cases which do not come within the scope of the ordinary asylum. Emergencies of sickness or of temporary disruption often arise in the families of the poor, when it is an incalculable help if the children can be safely disposed of for a time, without the necessity of surrendering them for a term of years. A hard place is tided over; the health, perhaps the life, of a worn mother is saved; an erring father is aided and stimulated to regain the footing he has lost; and, after a few weeks or months, the family life is resumed.

There is also the advantage that in so small an institution as this, many of the much deprecated drawbacks of "institutionalism" are averted. The wisest students and the most competent administrators of benevolence have expressed grave misgivings as to the advantages of large institutions for the care of children. Recognizing the immense good which such institutions have accomplished, they yet deplore the inevitable imperfections of the wholesale method. In a conference on methods of benevolence, held at the United Charities Building in this city, much emphasis was laid on the evils of institutionalism. Several experienced leaders in work for children strongly urged the equipment of institutions on the cottage system. The point insisted on was the preservation of the family idea and tone. Precisely this is feasible in a little church home like ours. The children have their meals with the matron, at a well-appointed home table. The matron and the nurse

can give to all of them something at least of the individual thought and care, the "mothering" that the child nature craves and needs, and which with the best intentions can hardly be bestowed where children are dealt with by hundreds. As Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin has aptly put it, a cosy home with a little "h" is better for every child than the best regular home with a capital H.

This opens up a wide vista of opportunity for the Church. As we have a little *Home for Children*, and endeavor thus, on a small scale, to meet the wants of our neighborhood, we hope soon to have also a *Home for the Sick*. I have sometimes thought that our charities are on too large a scale, and might better be divided into smaller sections, so as to meet neighborhood requirements. This would be done if each church had its little institution for the sick, or for the aged, as well as for little children. In this way could be secured that close and Argus-eyed inspection to which all philanthropy should be constantly exposed. No wrong could be done to an inmate of a church institution without all the church knowing about it, especially if there were a sewing circle in the church.

I cannot too strongly emphasize work among children. It is through the children that the great masses of foreign population will be gradually assimilated, Christianized, naturalized. As a rule the foreigners among us should not be organized into churches of their own, with services in their own tongues. Such churches are sure to languish, because the children of the foreigners, as they grow up, will want to attend American churches, and listen

to English preaching. The better way is for the American church to employ a foreign minister who will assist its own pastor, holding, two or three times a week, a service in the foreign language, to meet the requirement of the grown-up people who will, perhaps, never learn to speak English, and to whom worship in their own tongue has a peculiar sweetness; and at the same time gathering the children of his own nationality into the different children's departments of the American church. In this way racial needs will be satisfied and the church becomes somewhat cosmopolitan in its character. There should be one organized Church, one Communion Table, one Board of Ministers, one Sunday Morning Service, with several Sunday Evening Services in the several languages. And we may learn that, as in the Apostolic day, an amalgam of nationalities will make a stronger church than the metal of any one race, and that there is no more potent witness to the divineness of Christianity than that abolition of race antipathy, which the Apostle calls the *breaking down of the middle wall of partition between us*.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH AND YOUNG MEN.

A church that proposes to cope with the tides of social evil that converge against it in a great city like ours, ought to have a *parish house*. This word, which you cannot find even in the Century Diction-

ary, may be defined as enclosed space, either within the church edifice or near by, to be used for other than strictly and distinctly religious purposes. The main auditory of a church should be used for worship alone. The place where we meet to observe the holy ordinances of our religion, and to join in the public and the solemn devotions of Sunday, should never be invaded by any secular entertainment. That spot is not inherently more sacred than any other, but we are such creatures of association that, if we meet to pray in a place which we have already used for other than religious purposes, the mind harks back, and is so infested by the memories of incongruous scenes, that it may fall short of worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Let only hallowed suggestions pervade the place where we engage in prayer —

“That stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it still.”

Hence the need of a *hall* contiguous to the main auditory, but entirely distinct from it. Here may be held the cheerful exercises of the Sunday-school, and the more social devotions of the prayer-meeting; and into the *hall* I would not scruple to admit the lecture, or the concert, or the pastor's reception, or the church sociable. This is the rudiment of the parish-house.

It would not be strange if this hall should blossom into a *school-house*. Either it may be itself used for educational purposes, or there will be two or three apartments connected with it, equipped as school-

rooms. If a church is situated in a foreign or uncongenial community, as has been remarked in a former chapter, it will have to gather the children together on week days as well as Sunday.

But the *parish-house* should include not only a *hall* and *school-room*; there should be *headquarters for young men*. It would be well if the young men in each church were organized into a society — a kind of local Young Men's Christian Association. In this way the spirit and the methods of that great society would be widely diffused and applied at a myriad different points. When Satan proposes to debauch a city full of people, he doesn't build a grand central saloon at one conspicuous point and then establish three or four additional branches. He just honeycombs the city. He puts a snug, cheerful saloon on almost every corner. The weary wayfarer has not far to travel in order to find brightness, warmth, companionship and a drink. Now if each church had its society of young men, with headquarters consisting of sitting-rooms, reading-room and gymnasium, then, on the great principle of displacement they could cope with this insidious and gigantic evil of intemperance. Like Michael, the archangel, we could contend successfully with the devil, and effectually dispute with him about the bodies of our young men. Why could not even a poor church do this, as well as have a choir, forming within itself a musical home, into which congenial spirits are attracted? When the electric light was introduced, the great problem was how to disperse it so as to distribute the rays evenly through-

out all the rooms of a large house. Now the church edifices are pretty evenly distributed throughout the the city, and if each one of them should become a centre of light and cheer for the young men in its immediate neighborhood, the problem of enlightening the city would be solved.

Let the Young Men's Headquarters, then, consist, if possible, of a sitting-room, a library and reading-room, and a gymnasium. Let the sitting-room have a coffee-urn in the corner, a fire-place, easy chairs, tables, and a variety of innocent games. If a young man, living for instance, in a hall bedroom — a stranger in the city — is at a loss how to spend the evening socially, he has a place where he can meet other young men and enjoy such recreation as he needs after the day's work is done. If he wants to study or read, he has a quiet, comfortable place where he can get good books as well as the periodicals of the day. If, after hours of sedentary occupation, he needs to stretch and tire his muscles, he can take instructions in gymnastics under a teacher who understands the whole science of body-building. In this way he is gently and unconsciously lured within the influence of the Church. What we need is a kind of a half-way house on the road leading from the saloon to the prayer-meeting. Nowadays you cannot swing religion into a young man's consciousness prayer-meeting end to. A young man in a great city like ours finds himself peculiarly solitary. And it is so much easier to form bad companionship than good! Each church has a great work to do in the line of throwing around strangers allurements of

friendliness. In Lake Champlain the nets are provided with vast wings that reach out sidewise, and with their soft and tenuous filaments gently coerce the fish into the fatal enclosure. The Church ought to have just such wings of alluring influence.

Of course, everything might have to be on a smaller scale in the local church than in the Young Men's Christian Association. The smaller the better, perhaps. For, after all, you are only striving to meet neighborhood wants, and one of the first things to learn in Christian work is the limitations of our responsibility. If your equipment be too large and fine and expensive, other churches trying to follow your example may be discouraged, and so your work does not prove as effective an object lesson. Let us be content to carry out good ideas on a small scale. This American passion for bigness is destroying much good. What is needed in order to change for the good the stubborn character of our community is not great tabernacles where masses of people shall be loosely and precariously held together by the personal magnetism of one man. People must be handled at close quarters. There must be organization and tedious educational processes. What is needed is not some great ecclesiastical establishment, but numerous smaller churches, embedded in the mass of the people, and each church a compact, social machine, instinct with

“ The spirit

God meant should mate His with an infinite range and
inherit

His power to put life in the darkness and cold.”

We have Classes in Gymnastics for Young Men on Tuesday and Thursday evenings of each week, our gymnasium being used by the boys on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, and by the women and girls on Monday evening. With the exception of the Classes in Gymnastics for Women and Girls, on Monday evening, which are very popular and largely attended, so that the nightly fees for admission pay all expenses for instruction, suits, apparatus and music, we are doing little or nothing in an organized way for young women. Much could be accomplished, no doubt, through Girls' Friendlies and the like. We find that women and girls respond to efforts of this kind more appreciatively and more efficiently than boys and young men. But, in the particular part of the city where we are, more provision is made for the physical, social and mental wants of young women than of any other class. The excellent Young Women's Christian Association, with its fine building and well-conducted departments of educational and philanthropic work, is not far from us, and we are slow to undertake to meet a need which is already better met by others. But the ideal way would be for the young women in each church to have a Young Women's Christian Association to do work among the young women in its particular neighborhood. I have often thought that if the Young Men's Christian Association were organized at the present day, instead of fifty years ago, it, like the Young People's Society for Christian Endeavor, would twine its efforts more closely around the local church. Would it not have

been far better for it to house its varied and beneficent activities in the Christian church edifices that are unused for so large a part of every week, than to build throughout the country, at vast expense, a second series of sacred buildings, in many of which it performs all the religious functions of the Church except Communion and Baptism, so that in many respects it seems itself to be developing into a church, but one that discriminates against old people, women and children? (See Appendix, note 2.)

A Bible class in the Sunday School may sometimes be successfully developed into a Young Men's Club. This is the method of the Baraca Societies, which in many churches have proved so flourishing and beneficial.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH AND FINANCE.

The different forms of institutional work described in these pages cannot be produced without the expenditure of money, and the question naturally arises, How can the expenses of institutionalism be met in a down-town field? It is important that the people be trained to give, and even the poor, if they learn to give systematically, may be depended upon to do a great deal for the work of their church, provided the seats are free and the giving be made an integral part of the worship on Sunday.

I think that free seats are more consonant with the teaching of Scripture than rented pews. There

is, indeed, no positive command that seats in church should be free, but the general trend of evangelical truth is in that direction. The Protestant view is, that salvation is free, and we perform work and make sacrifices, out of gratitude to God. The Catholic view is, rather, that we must earn our right to heaven by our own works and sacrifices. Now, human nature is so put together that, as suggested by a Scriptural instance, where there is one who will give glory to God because he is healed, there are nine who will only perform works of righteousness in order that they may be healed; and this is why Catholics are more scrupulous in church observances than Protestants. It is because fear of going to hell is a more pungent motive with the rank and file of humanity than gratitude for the free gift of salvation. But we must stand for the truth, even with the minority.

Now, the commercial principle of renting pews does not chime with the great evangelical truth of free salvation. Not only so, but I think it can be shown that the system of renting pews is in direct violation of inspired teaching. Let us take a fair instance of a church in which that system prevails. Let it be a church which people want to attend. I do not mean a church where a mere handful of worshipers gather — hardly enough to carry one of their number out if he should be taken ill — but a church in which the seats are desirable and well filled. Again, let us exclude those exceptional marvels of church architecture where every seat is as good as any other. Let us suppose that some of the pews,

on account of remoteness from the minister or the presence of columns, are inferior to others. In such a church, if the system of pew rent prevails, you will invariably find that the richer people will occupy the better seats, and the poorer people will have the inferior pews, and we may quite accurately estimate a person's social position by the seat which he occupies in God's house. Now, this is in direct contravention of the familiar precept of St. James: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons, for if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, stand thou there; or, if you must sit down (it is strange that a poor man should expect it), sit here under my foot-stool (that is, on the pavement). Are ye not then partial in yourselves (or, as Meyer renders it, do ye not doubt in yourselves? In other words, the very bottom has dropped out of your religion), and are become judges of evil thoughts (or, in other words, evil-minded judges)?"

It is as if the inspired writer should say, that if we systematically and continuously, and on principle, violate a plain precept in our inspired Book, we almost cease to have the right to call ourselves Christians. How can a church expect the smile of Heaven if it persistently contravenes a clear direction given to it in a Book which it claims is inspired of God?

But while it seems to be more consonant with the spirit of the Christian religion that everything in church should be free, and while a church seems to be surrendering its strongest vantage-ground when it descends to the arena of trade, exposing its religious commodities for sale, and meeting a community on a low commercial plane, yet many objections to free seats will at once occur to a thoughtful mind. Is there not danger of the dispersion of the family in the house of God? Through an experience of about eighteen years in a free church, I have not perceived that the members of the same family have found it difficult, not only to sit together, but generally in the same place each Sunday; but even if such a danger should impend, it could readily be obviated by the free assignment of seats to regular worshippers.

The apprehension is also sometimes felt, that the necessary expenses of public worship cannot be met if the seats are free — that people will not give as much in the form of free-will offerings as they would for the rent of their pews. I want to take a fair view. I would not like to assume the tone of an advocate. While I have been, for about eighteen years, serving a church the members of which are, almost without exception, in humble circumstances, they have raised annually, by voluntary offerings, nearly seven thousand dollars. It should, however, be said that I have spent upon the field each year an equivalent sum raised outside the church, for philanthropic, educational and missionary purposes. This must be taken into account, for doubtless through these

special measures, paid for by money contributed from without, persons have been brought into the church and have become regular contributors.

You will have little trouble in persuading the poor to give their proportion. It may be that the wealthy would give more, in response to the commercial pressure of pew rents; but I am sure that the poor may be depended upon to give far more on the voluntary system. And even if a sponging spirit prevails in the attitude of the community to the church, whose fault is it? Is not the Church to blame, since it has so long accustomed the people to meet it in a commercial spirit? Is it at all strange that a community, which through a long series of generations, has been trained up to the plan of *quid pro quo*, should upon the sudden application of the voluntary principle, feel inclined to impose on the church? It is as if a man who had worn shoulder braces for many years, should suddenly leave them off. But let the church persevere in the policy of free seats, and I think that in the end a larger stream of revenue will flow into her coffers through voluntary channels than along the groove of the commercial principle.

The principle, in order to succeed, must be thoroughly believed in and wisely applied. Some people seem to think that an idea of Jesus has such inherent and stubborn vitality, that you can lay it down as you would a foundling on a doorstep, and it will feed itself and clothe itself and educate itself without any trouble to anybody. So strong is their faith in the supernatural element of our religion, that they feel exempt from any special obligation to use their own

efforts to make truth a success in the world. They proclaim the system of free seats and then sit down and see how it will work. No, we must step on board the ideas of Jesus and then navigate them with our utmost prudence. There was once a minister who did not know how to harness his horse. The time came when he had to perform that somewhat intricate operation. What did the poor man do, but drop the harness down on the barn floor and then undertake to drive his horse into it. You cannot drive a church into the ideas of Jesus; they must be gently, wisely and unweariedly applied.

In order to make free seats a success, the duty of giving for the maintenance of religion must be earnestly and frequently preached and pressed home. This a minister can do when the seats are free, as he cannot do when they are rented. Let the giving be systematic. Make use of the envelope system. On the first Sunday of the financial year, persuade each worshiper, not only the heads of families, but each little child as well; not the well-to-do only, but also the poor, to take a package containing as many envelopes as there are Sundays in the year, each envelope bearing a date. Indicate to the people, perhaps by means of a blackboard, that one cent a Sunday means fifty cents a year, and that five cents means two dollars and fifty cents, and so onward and upward. Have them deposit the envelope at either preaching service, or at the Sunday school. It might be well to have each package numbered, the number standing for the holder of the package. But if so, the treasurer of the church must be a discreet man and it

must be understood that what each one gives remains a secret with him. Let the voluntariness of the system be emphasized. It is my custom to have the envelopes passed around in church at the time when the subject is first presented, so that all the worshippers may supply themselves. Then I speak of the matter on two or three succeeding Sundays, so that the people who are not present on the first Sunday may understand the plan and may secure envelopes. Besides this, every two or three months I refer to our plan in the course of a sermon, urging people to fidelity and inviting new worshippers to take hold. At the end of the year, I advise those who have fallen behind in their giving to tear up the old envelopes, if they cannot make up the deficiency, and begin the new year with a clean slate.

Again, in order to make free seats a success, the giving for the support of the Gospel should be made, as it is in the Church of England, an integral part of divine worship. I never use the term *taking up a collection*, but rather *making an offering*. The method with us is as follows: At the close of the sermon, the organ begins to play softly. I descend from the pulpit and give the collection plates to the officers of the church, who gather up the gifts and deposit them in my hands, while all the time I am repeating appropriate Scriptures. Then, when the officers have taken their seats, I offer all to the Lord in a word of prayer. I believe that this part of the worship may be made as attractive and inspiring as any other, except it be the Holy Communion.

The objection is sometimes made to the free seat

system, that the people will regard what they give for the support of their church as benevolence, and accordingly there will be a falling off in their gifts for distinctively missionary purposes. This danger must be guarded against. I have not, however, observed any such tendency among my own people. I think it works well to have for missionary offerings another set of envelopes than those used for the church — of a different color, say red instead of brown — pursuing, however, in both cases the same general plan. Each worshiper, in order to perform his full duty, would deposit in the collection every Sunday two envelopes of different colors, one for his church, the other for missions.

This need not, however, exclude an annual appeal; for some would prefer, perhaps, to make their offering once a year in one sum. When, however, the time for the annual appeal comes, it should be understood that those whose custom it is to make a weekly offering are not expected to give more on that Sunday than their regular proportion.

Again, as regards institutional features, there will be no expenses for rent, because, for the most of this work, the rooms in the church edifice itself may be used for institutional purposes, so that the building will be all the time instinct with life and use and joy. The Sunday-school room in many of our churches would make an ideal place for a day school. It is much more commodious and better ventilated than many of our public school rooms. I sometimes think that our churches show too little economy in their use of property. In a part of the city,

for instance, where worldly men are erecting structures from six to sixteen stories above ground, with two or three floors under ground, and are using these buildings during all the twenty-four hours of every day in the week for business and for residence, the people of God will spread out their edifice with a frontage of, say, one hundred and fifty feet, occupying a single floor, their church proper and Sunday-school room being placed side by side. And this space which they enclose and shut in from the genial habitations of men they use only from twelve to fifteen hours a week. The rest of the time it is occupied by mice, silence and gloom —

“ But else it is a lonely time
Round the church of Brou.”

Now, if these empty spaces could be occupied with educational and philanthropic work, the church would make upon the community an impression of vitality instead of solitude and death. What a god-send it would be, if the solemn church should become each week day a school, and be filled with the joyous, crescent life of childhood!

In the original construction, also, of the church edifice a provision may be made for an endowment, a part of the building being erected with a view to meeting the needs of that particular part of the town, so that there may be produced a revenue which can be used in institutional work. This suggests the general question of church endowment. I can see no reason why a church should not be endowed as well as an educational institution. Only the rev-

enue from the endowment should be used, not for the normal current expenses of the church, producing a spirit of ecclesiastical pauperism, but to sustain the aggressive, missionary, educational and philanthropic work, which would tend in an alien and uncongenial community to quarry out a membership which would be able to pay the current expenses. My equation would be that a church must spend on the field in aggressive work a sum equal to what it requires for its normal current expenses.

There are, moreover, many forms of institutional work which are comparatively inexpensive. The working people very willingly co-operate in plans for the betterment of their condition, and for innocent, wholesome and instructive entertainments in the evening. We have found that our gymnastic classes for women and girls have more than met the expenses of instruction and equipment through the fees which the members willingly pay. The church has little idea how much institutional work she can do if she encourages the working people around her to co-operate under her influence and direction, giving them the use of her rooms. In this way the people are conciliated, and come to regard the church as their friend.

Again, there are many people of large means in our cities that become interested in practical work of this kind and will contribute what they might feel inclined to withhold from the ordinary church treasury. It is easy to bring against the rich the wholesale charge of covetousness. But I believe that here in New York there is immense treasure in

suspense and ready to be used, when the possessors are convinced that their gifts will do more good than harm, when channels are laid open through which their benevolence may flow for the actual relief of suffering and for the permanent amelioration of mankind. So much money is wasted in charity and in missionary work that I do not wonder wealthy people are slow and cautious. Like an old rat that has been nipped in many traps, they grow very wary. But let wealthy men and women know that under their eyes and in their own church there are such forms of educational and philanthropic work as I have described, and you will be surprised to see how readily they will subscribe for their support.

Besides, there are, even on our great avenues, sporadic cases of missionary zeal. People will avail themselves of the opportunity which an Institutional Church puts within their reach of devoting themselves as well as their money to such work. Only in this way can society be changed for the better. The wise and good and happy must come themselves into close personal touch with those who are depraved and sad. There is a good deal of truth in those fine words of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby: "The most certain softeners of a man's moral skin and sweeteners of his blood are, I am sure, domestic intercourse in a happy marriage and intercourse with the poor."

CHAPTER X.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH AND
DENOMINATIONALISM.

The Christian finds himself bounded by three concentric horizons. The innermost circle is the local church, which may be defined as himself with those of his fellow-believers who habitually receive the bread and the cup at the same communion table. These little nuclei are grouped into a larger social organism called the denomination, which comprehends Christians, who, while they cherish with others the great essential truths of Christendom, stoutly hold certain distinctive tenets of their own. This forms our second horizon. We cannot find denominationalism in the Bible. Nevertheless, it is a stubborn historic fact, and must be taken account of. The outermost horizon of all is the spiritual church — that vague and majestic conception which glimmers here and there in Holy Scripture, and reminds us that all, whether members of any local church or not, who by personal faith and love accept Christ as their Saviour and Guide, belong to one flock and have one Shepherd. Each one of us dwells within the embrace of these three concentric horizons — church, denomination, Christendom.

Now each denomination of Christians, whether Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or Congregationalist, or Methodist, or Baptist, witnesses to certain distinctive truths. This many-sidedness enables the

Christian Church more effectively to minister to the varied wants of individual temperaments. Each denomination fancies that it embraces the whole sphere of revealed truth, while in reality it is merely engaged in rounding out a segment of the sphere, so that, through the co-operation of all, the whole system of Christian doctrine will finally assume in the minds of men its full-orbed proportions.

How futile, then, is denominational selfishness! For when a denomination has borne complete witness to the truths providentially committed to its charge, and they have little by little filtered through the consciousness of Christendom, and have become the common property and belief of Christians at large, then its very *raison d'être* ceases to exist. It has performed its mission. There is nothing left for it to do but to distribute its assets, put up the shutters and go out of business. Denominational triumph means denominational dissolution. There is no copyright on truth. What we believe, if it is true, will be gradually believed by everybody. The doctrines which each denomination stands for, if they are true, will be silently appropriated by others, and it will not even get the credit of them. People will not join the denomination, but its truth will join the people where they are. All truth is essentially pervasive. The Christian world is becoming more and more like the England which Tennyson describes:

“ A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down,
From precedent to precedent.”

“Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees of fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.”

Christians are not all going to join any one of the existing denominations. But whatever of distinctive doctrine is essentially true all Christians will silently appropriate, regardless of its source.

This wide, subtile process is constantly going on. The denominational partitions are all the time growing thinner, and distinctive truths are oozing and leaking through, so that we shall wake up some fine morning and discover, to our surprise, that the liquid in all the denominational compartments is substantially the same, and some of us with considerable reluctance will find that we all believe essentially alike. This is the unity we are arriving at, whether we want to or not. All Christians will not ultimately become members of one denomination either here or in heaven, but, little by little, all the truth that is preserved and witnessed to by each denomination will become the common property of all. It is a fair question whether, in many cases, when a minister finds himself strongly attracted by the features of another denomination than his own, it is not his bounden duty to remain right where he is, and sturdily realize, if possible, within his own communion, the ideas and spirit which he admires, and not carry coals to Newcastle by joining another denomination, provided, of course, he does not radically diverge from the doctrines of the Christian body which he represents.

Will denominations then pass away? I think not. Names have always been more stubborn historic facts than things. A form will last long after the truth has evaporated out of it. Denominational partitions will survive as convenient division walls for Christian work.

If these things are so, how foolish it is for a human soul to cramp itself up by denominational conceptions of Christianity. It is a significant fact that the communion which is advancing most rapidly here in New York is the one that has least to say about its distinctive dogmas, and is most concerned with matters relating to the worship of the Eternal, and with right methods of relieving the sufferings of our fellow-creatures. She cherishes the spirit so well described in the courtly phrases of Phillips Brooks: "The channel which is not wide enough to contain the full torrent of the spring-time is thankful that the drops she cannot hold find wayward courses of their own down to the sea; and at the same time she makes herself wider and wider, that more and more of the water may find way through her." There is a good deal of sound philosophy in the blunt, dogmatic language of old Andrew Fuller: "It is an important principle, that where any denomination or congregation seeks only *its own*, it will be disappointed; but where it seeks the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, its own prosperity will be among the things that will be added unto it. I have seen great zeal for what among us is called *the dissenting interest*; and in such hands the dissenting interest has died. Had they

sought more to make men *Christians*, they should in most cases have been dissenters of their own accord. In fact, I see that in those congregations where the main object is what it should be, there religion flourishes."

It is by cherishing such sentiments as these that we shall help to realize that dream of church unity which sounds faintly in our ears like the premature song of a half-awakened bird before daylight. So shall we bring to pass the devout aspiration: "More especially we pray for thy holy Church universal, that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."

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[For valuable aid in the making of this Index I am indebted to my friend, the Reverend Dr. JAMES W. WILLMARTH.— E. J.]

APPENDIX.

NOTE 1.— We often feel that ours are times of spiritual aridity. Revivals seem long deferred and difficult to achieve. We sometimes think we shall never see one again. If we succeed in kindling a little fire in our church, it refuses to spread. It is like trying to warm all outdoors. Without inquiring too curiously into the causes of this condition, we should not give up all hope of a general awakening. Let us pray for it, and work for it, and wait for it. But let us not wait in idleness. Let us utilize the dry time that intervenes. Every Sunday night and at the close of every social meeting, individualize the members of your audience. Have some simple method of segregating each attendant, who is not an avowed Christian; and try to make an appointment for a personal interview immediately at the close of the service. In this way you will have conversation with two or three inquirers after every meeting, and the church will constantly gain new accessions — one or two or more every Sunday. If you cannot draw the seine, you can at least do a little hook-and-line fishing all the time. Then you can await the general revival with a quiet mind, and perhaps the converts gained by these sensible and serene methods will excel in weight of Christian personality and influence those who will come in only at seasons of extraordinary effort.

I do not think we often address a group of people, but that, if we watch them closely one by one, we will discover hidden away among the rest isolated cases of those who

are not avowed Christians. The problem is how to get at these, without asking them every time to stand up, or to raise their hands, or in some other way openly to confess Christ. Such tests soon become stereotyped and monotonous. I find them of little use except at seasons of special interest. Our great temptation at the close of Sunday is to feel so tired that we glance superficially over the congregation, and, hastily concluding that all are either Christians or else impervious to our appeals, we dismiss the people and go home, without gathering the fruit which was ready to drop at a touch.

NOTE 2.—Just so far as the Young Men's Christian Association performs distinctively ecclesiastical functions, it discredits the church and displaces it in the consciousness of Christians. A very effective way of promoting the disuse and consequent debility of any physical organ is to lay its functions upon some other organ. The Young Men's Christian Association is performing an important service by teaching the church through an impressive object-lesson what she ought herself to do along philanthropic and educational lines. We cannot do better than to pattern our methods of reaching young men upon the experience wrought out by the Association through its long and honorable history.

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